

REGION

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FARMERS IN HARYANA INCURRING RS 19500 CRORE ANNUAL LOSS IN THE ABSENCE OF SYL CANAL WATER

G-20 summit will promote Punjab as a preferred destination for business on international stage: CM

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said that the prestigious G-20 summit, scheduled to be held in the holy city of Amritsar in March-2023, will promote Punjab as a preferred destination for business on the international level and it will also provide a stage to the government to showcase its achievements and facilities for setting up new businesses. Announcing that he will leave no stone unturned to make the event a success, the Chief Minister said that this is a golden opportunity when Punjab can be presented as a land of best opportunities and by bringing maximum investment they can create new employment opportunities for the youth.



During a meeting at the Civil Secretariat here to review the preparations for the summit, the Chief Minister said that leading countries of the world are participating in this sum-

CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

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ELON MUSK SAYS WON'T FIRE 75 PER CENT OF TWITTER STAFF AS HE FINALISES DEAL

world will discuss education and labour and other crucial issues. The Chief Minister said that extensive arrangements will be made for the success of this global event.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister was told that to ensure the success of the event, the holy city will be divided into five major sectors on an administrative basis. Senior officers of the civil and police administration of the state will be posted in these sectors for proper management. During the convention, these officers will be responsible for smoothing the entire work in their respective jurisdictions.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister took the stock of the works to be done to further embellish the structure of the city and said that whatever work is being carried out, it

should be of best quality, which will benefit the residents of the city for a long time.

On this occasion, the Minister of Local Government, member of the cabinet sub-committee appointed for the success of the program, Inderbir Singh Nijjar and Public Works Minister Harbhajan Singh ETO along with Cabinet Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal were also present.

After the meeting, the Chief Minister paid obeisance to Sri Darbar Sahib along with Cabinet Ministers and greeted the people of Punjab on auspicious Bandi Chhor Diwas and Diwali.

POTPOURRI

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ZAREEN KHAN'S LATEST 'NAGABHAIRAV' HAS HER TRADING PUNCHES IN DUAL AVATAR

Sukhbir Badal appeals to Sri Akal Takth Jathedar and Panthic orgs to guide SAD in protecting panthic institutions including the SGPC

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal today appealed to the Jathedar of Akal Takth Sahib (highest Sikh temporal seat) as well as heads of Panthic organizations to guide the SAD in protecting panthic institutions, including the Shiromani Gurdwara Pabandhak Committee (SGPC) from the onslaught of nefarious elements who were bent on dividing the Sikh community.

Addressing the sangat (gathering of Sikh devotees) at Diwan Hall in the Sri Darbar Sahib complex (Golden Temple) on the centenary of Saka Panja Sahib, the SAD president also appealed to the Sikh community to unite and identify the anti-panthic forces weakening the Panth and its institutions. "We should together act as a buttress against such divisive forces in order to give them a befit-



ting response". Asserting that the SAD and the SGPC were not anybody's property, Sukhbir Badal said both were democratic bodies whose heads were elected to office. He said it was unfortunate that the centre as well as its agencies were trying to weaken both institutions by misusing members of the community. He said it was because of these agencies that the DSGMC had been overtaken by anti-panthic

forces and now even the Haryana Committee was threatened.

Describing these activities as an attack on the Sikh community, Badal said "these forces want to sub divide the community and its institutions into small groups to erode the strength of the Panth". Appealing to the gathering to foil these nefarious designs, the SAD President said the Sikh community was known for 'Simran, Sewa & Sacrifice'.

Nearly 250 criminals identified preparing fake passports, 126 arrested in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

During a recent meeting held at Suraj kund in Faridabad district presided by Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khatter in which Amit Shah Home Minister and large number of bureaucrats from state crime department were also present when the issue of fake passports being prepared in the state prepared on the basis of fake documents, even Aadhar Cards' giving rise to the criminals activities in which it was observed that gangsters as well as hard core criminals managed to flee to other countries after committing crimes in order to avoid police arrest. Chief Minister disclosed that state crime department after thorough investigations identified nearly 250 persons found involved in such illegal practices in the state some of them also having close links with few police personnel in the state, out of them 126 such persons have already been arrested.

India wins post of Chairperson of ICAO's Air Transport Committee

India won a coveted position in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) with its representative Shefali Juneja unanimously elected Chairperson of the Air Transport Committee, after 28 years. Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Tuesday termed this as good news. "Great News! This solidifies India's position in the global aviation ecosystem, and strengthens our journey towards becoming the largest civil aviation market," he said in a tweet.

Azam Khan disqualified from UP Assembly, House secretariat declares seat vacant



LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly Secretariat on Friday announced the disqualification of Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan from the House, a day after a court sentenced him to three years in jail in a hate speech case. Principal Secretary of the UP Legislative Assembly, Pradeep Dubey told to media that the assembly secretariat has declared the Rampur Sadar Assembly seat as vacant. "A vacancy has been declared by the UP Vidhan Sabha Secretariat consequent upon the disqualification due to the judgment passed by the court," he said.

Sikh jatha departs for Pakistan to participate in Saka Panja Sahib centenary congregation

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

A special jatha of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) on October 28 departed for Pakistan from Amritsar, to participate in the 100 year centenary congregation of Shaheed Saka (martyrdom massacre) Panja Sahib to be held on October 30.

Among others, Jathedar of Akal Takth Sahib Giani Harpreet Singh, former SGPC

president Bhai Gobind Singh Longowal, head granthi of Akal Takth Sahib Giani Malkit Singh, crossed over to Pakistan to attend the congregations to be held at Gurdwara Panja Sahib.

On reaching Pakistan, on the other side at Wagah border, Pakistan Government accorded warm welcome to the Sikh Jatha as special program was organised to receive the Sikh pilgrims from India besides heavy security arrangements for them.



Speaking at the departure of jatha, Bhai Gobind Singh Longowal said that the SGPC is jointly organising centenary congregations related to Shaheed Saka with Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC) on October 29

and 30. He said a special SGPC jatha is going to participate in the centenary congregations.

"The centenary events and congregation of Saka Panja Sahib holds great importance, therefore, the governments should grant visas to pilgrims with open heart. Rejecting visas to pilgrim members of special jatha on this occasion is not good", said Longowal. Notably, the SGPC had sent passports of 157 pilgrims for visa approval, of which, 117 got the visas.

Four shooters of Bambiha gang arrested in Punjab

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Police have arrested four shooters of the Davinder Bambiha gang, including two assailants of Uttrakhand Mining Trader from Mohali, said Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav here on Friday.

Mining trader Mehal Singh (70) was shot dead outside his house on October 13.

The operation was jointly carried out by the Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF), Counter Intelligence (CI) Punjab, the



District Police of Udham Singh Nagar Uttarakhand, the Special Cell Delhi and the District Police of Mohali. The arrested persons are Sadhu Singh, Jagdish Singh,

alias Disha, Manpreet Singh, alias Mani, Jaspreet Singh, all resident of Mansa district.

The police have also recovered one .30 caliber pistol along with two magazines and seven cartridges; one 9 mm pistol along with one magazine; and one Turkey-made 9 mm machine-pistol along with three magazines, including one magazine of 31 cartridges capacity and 19 cartridges and one Apache motorcycle from their possession.

SGPC President Dharami hands over memorandum Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar demanding release of Sikh prisoners

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Advocate Harjinder Singh Dharami today handed over a memorandum letter to Vice President (VP) of India Jagdeep Dhankhar, demanding release of Bandi Singhs (Sikh political prisoners).

Dhankhar today reached here along with family to pay obeisance at Sachkhand Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) and expressed his devotion.

In his letter, Dharami said Sikh prisoners are lodged in different Indian jails for nearly three decades despite completion of their sentences, which was a big injustice with the Sikh community. He said imprisoned Sikhs chose the path of struggle in 1984 in protest against the military attack on Central Sikh shrine Sachkhand Sri Harmandir Sahib and Sri Akal Takth Sahib in Amritsar, named as Operation Bluestar by the then Congress government.

He said SGPC had been demanding release of Sikh prisoners through democratic means



for a long time. Dharami said that on the issue of Sikh prisoners, the SGPC had also sent letters seeking appointments of meetings to the Prime Minister of India, Home Minister of India, Chief Ministers of Delhi and Karnataka states, but the Sikh body did not receive any positive response.

He said that it is being felt that by not releasing the Sikh prisoners, they are being discriminated against, as they have already served double sentences than life imprisonments.

SGPC President demanded from the Vice President to take cognizance of this important issue of release of Sikh prisoners and issue necessary directions to the Government of India and concerned State Governments for their release.

Meanwhile, the Vice President assured the SGPC President to take up this issue.

Kejriwal urges PM to introduce currency notes with images of Laxmi-Ganesh

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to introduce currency notes with pictures of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Laxmi along with that of Mahatma Gandhi.

"One Hundred and thirty crore people of the country wish that there should be a picture of Gandhi ji on one side and Shri Ganesh ji and Lakshmi ji on the other side of Indian currency", he said in the letter.

The letter further says that the country's economy is passing



through a very bad phase. "Even after 75 years of independence, India is counted among the developing and poor countries. There are so many poor people in our country even today. Why?", CM Kejriwal asked. "On one hand we all countrymen need to work hard and on the other

hand we also need the blessings of God so that our efforts are fruitful. Right policy, hard work and God's blessings will only make the country progress through their confluence", read the letter. "I publicly demanded this in a press conference yesterday," Kejriwal said in the letter. Since then, there has been tremendous support from the general public on this issue, there is tremendous enthusiasm among the people about it. Everyone wants this to be implemented immediately, it added.

Modi's visit to Mangarh Dham in Raj, BJP targets 99 seats from 3 states

JAIPUR: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address a large public meeting on November 1 at Mangarh Dham, the main pilgrimage site of tribals in Rajasthan's Banswara district.

Thousands of tribals from three states -- Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh -- will attend this meeting. The BJP is eyeing to woo the voters from 99 tribal seats through public meetings and conferences.

As per information, around



25 seats in Rajasthan Legislative Assembly, 27 in Gujarat Legislative Assembly, 47 seats in Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly are reserved for STs. The CM and

BJP state presidents of all the three states have been invited to the November 1 rally.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan are also invited to the programme.

Union Culture Minister G. Kishan Reddy, Minister of State Meenakshi Lekhi and Union Minister of State for Culture Arjun Ram Meghwal from Rajasthan will also be present in the programme.

Elon Musk fires Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal

Elon Musk has completed his acquisition of Twitter, and as expected, the Tesla founder fired four top executives at the company, including CEO Parag Agrawal. Musk's decision is not surprising given he has publicly accused Agrawal of misleading him on the number of spam-bot accounts. Musk famously used a poop emoji to reply to one of Agrawal's tweets. Here's a quick look at Agrawal's short-lived term at the social media company.

The India-born Agrawal was appointed as Twitter's CEO in November 2021 after Jack Dorsey stepped down. At the time, Dorsey had fully endorsed Agrawal. Given Musk has fired him, Agrawal's stint at the job was less than a year.

Agrawal is an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Bombay. He also has a PhD in Computer Science from Stanford University and has interned with other companies such as



Microsoft, Yahoo, and AT&T Labs. He first joined Twitter in 2011, so he has worked here for nearly 11 years. Previously, he was Twitter's Chief Technology Officer (CTO) and was appointed to the role in 2018. As reported previously, he played a role in the company's technical strategy, especially around machine learning and AI. He also led efforts on scaling Twitter Ads systems. While Musk has fired Agrawal, the relationship between the two did not have a rocky start, at least publicly. Back in April, when Musk had bought a majority stake in Twitter, Agrawal welcomed him. In fact, that's tweet

Elon Musk says Twitter will form 'content moderation council'

NEW YORK: Twitter's new owner billionaire Elon Musk has said the social media company will form a "content moderation council" and any major content decisions or account reinstatements will happen after such a body has convened. Musk's comments came a day after he completed the USD 44 billion acquisition of the social media giant. "Twitter will be forming a content moderation council with widely diverse viewpoints. No major content decisions or account reinstatements will happen before that council convenes," Musk, 51, tweeted on Friday.

shows up first on his profile as a 'popular tweet'.

AAP seeks Iqbal Singh Lalpura's removal as minorities panel Chief

NEWDELHI: Lashing out at the BJP for making political appointments to constitutional bodies, the Aam Aadmi Party sought the removal of Iqbal Singh Lalpura as Chairman of the National Minorities Commission for allegedly violating Central Civil Services Conduct Rules.

AAP leader Saurabh Bhardwaj said he has written to the Union Home Minister and Central Vigilance Commission demanding strict action against Lalpura and his immediate removal from the post.

"National Minorities Commission Chairman Iqbal Singh Lalpura also holds membership of BJP Parliamentary Board; this is a gross violation of Central Civil Services

Conduct Rules. He is also a member of the BJP's Central Election Committee along with being part of BJP's top-most political body, Parliamentary Board. Central Civil Services Conduct Rules bars a public servant from holding membership of any political body; he should be immediately removed from Constitutional post. The Aam Aadmi Party has complained to Home Minister Amit Shah and Central Vigilance Commission demanding his removal from Constitutional post," he said. Bhardwaj said that Lalpura heads a prominent constitutional body, which is autonomous and receives all types of complaints, including several complex matters.

Din rages to 'topple' Mahatma Gandhi from Indian currency note pedestal

A day after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's demand to add images of Goddess Laxmi and Lord Ganesh on Indian currency notes (ICN), clamour grew on Thursday among various political parties to 'topple' or 'overcrowd' Mahatma Gandhi's exalted pedestal on the country's paper money.

Various leaders from different parties such as the BJP, Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT), Republican Party of India (K) and others came up with different heroes - ranging from Gods and Goddesses to historical icons and freedom fighters who could share space with Gandhiji on the ICN.

BJP legislators like Nitesh Rane and Ram Kadam demanded the pictures of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Veer Savarkar, among others, on the ICN. They even circulated photoshopped ICN of Rs 200 and Rs 500 denominations showing the three leaders - with Gandhiji conspicuously missing in their proposed designs!

Prominent Congress Dalit leader Nitin Raut demanded to add the image of B.R. Ambedkar, which was seconded by Shiv Sena's (UBT) ex-Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar.

"Why not Ambedkar? It's because of him that the country is enjoying the fruits of democracy today," they pointed out. Republican Party of India (K) President Sachin Kharat demanded to add the image of Gautam Buddha, senior Sena (UBT) leader Anil Parab pitched the name of Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray, while deputy leader Raghunath Kuchik suggested Lord Ram or even Subhas Chandra Bose and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

"Ram Kadam (of BJP) has forgotten Lord Ram after whom he's named. Why only restrict Lord Ram to the Ayodhya temple, he can also figure on the ICN," Kuchik pointed out.

Maharashtra Congress chief spokesperson Atul Londhe, Nationalist Congress Party's chief spokesperson Mahesh Tapase, state Congress General Secretary Sachin Sawant, Shiv Sena spokesperson Kishore Tiwari and other BJP leaders had earlier slammed Kejriwal for his 'preposterous' demand.

Amid the cacophony, Pune-based businessman Prafull Sarda came up with a unique suggestion, which can silence the ICN controversy for eternity, especially since the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) high-level screening committee decided way back in 2010 that only Gandhiji will remain on ICN as "no other personality could better represent the ethos of India than Mahatma Gandhi".

"In view of this, the Centre can enact a suitable legislation not to disturb the ICN design with Gandhiji. However, the government can open up the Rs 5 and Rs 10 coins with minted pictures of all others, for commemoration or regular usage, as per status and demand to satisfy everybody," Sarda said.

In the past, India has minted coins with busts of Gandhiji, former PMs Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, King Edward VII, King George V, King George VI, Charminar, rained farming, tiger, lotus, Ashoka Chakra, IX Asian Games, Dandi March 75 years, Louis Braille, Satguru Ram Singh Ji's Kuka Movement, Diamond Jubilee of Commonwealth, National Archives of India 125 years, Benares Hindu University centenary, etc.



Farmers in Haryana incurring Rs 19500 crore annual loss in the absence of SYL canal water

SATISH HANDA

Recent meeting between Chief Ministers Haryana and Punjab for construction of SYL canal failed to resolve long pending issue since Punjab Chief Minister repeated old dialogues that Punjab government is not in a position to spare even a single drop of SYL canal water to Haryana as taught by AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal Chief Minister Delhi. Haryana Home & Health Minister Anil Vij expressing surprise said that Kejriwal claims himself as son of Haryana and at the same time not only exhibiting step attitude towards Haryana state but also violating Supreme Court of India directions which is a cruel joke on farmers of Haryana. Vij said, the aim of meeting between chief ministers of both states

was related to construction of SYL canal but Punjab Chief Minister Punjab continued repeating the dialogues as taught by Kejriwal. Information reveals, farmers in Haryana state are suffering financial loss worth Rs Rs 19500 crore every year in the absence of irrigation in nearly 10 lakh crore acre land due to shortage of their share of SYL canal water causing less production of about 42 lakh ton food crops every year since Punjab and Rajasthan are using nearly 2600 cusec water of Haryana share capable to irrigate nearly 10.08 lakh acre land remains dry not only due to water but also water level in underground in most of area in Haryana fast declining and farmers have to spend huge amount on electricity to lift underground water with the



help of tube wells or bear heavy diesel cost. July 1979 under section 78 of reconsideration Act in the court. In year 1981 an agreement was made between both governments in the presence of then Prime Minister Late Smt Indira Gandhi and construction of SYL canal started in 1982 when Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab opposed the same in an agitation when Rajiv-Longowal agreement was made in 1985 in which then Punjab government agreed upon the proposal and construction work started but

in the meanwhile two engineers involved in construction work were killed under mysterious circumstances in July 1990 and then Chief Minister Haryana Hukum Singh demanded from government in centre permission to construct the river in 1996 but to no result. However, with the involvement of court Punjab government started work to construct 121 km canal in 2016. Supreme Court of India took decision in favour of Haryana government and directed Punjab government to complete construction of river in 2019 but the same remained unimplemented by Punjab government and now Supreme Court of India has served a notice to both Punjab and Haryana governments to solve the issue mutually at an early.

Vigilance arrests private person for committing fraud of Rs 9 lakh with Coop bank

JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

The Punjab Vigilance Bureau (VB) during its ongoing campaign against corruption on Thursday arrested a private person Jagjit Singh of village Dhoolka, Amritsar district for committing embezzlement in the Central Cooperative Bank, Tarsika amounting to Rs. 9,75,771 in connivance with bank officials.

In an official release issued here today a spokesperson of VB said the above mentioned accused in conniving with bank manager Rakesh Kumar, cashier Ram Kishore and secretary Kulwant Singh had encashed the money after transferring it to the personal accounts of accused in other

banks whereas the cooperative bank could not transfer such amount from off-line account of Kisan Credit Card to other bank accounts. He further informed that during investigation by the VB, it was found that the above mentioned bank officials by colluding with the accused Jagjit Singh had transferred Rs.51,94,900 to other banks in Gehri Mandi, Amritsar district. In this case seven accused had already been arrested who had committed this fraud in the above said bank to the tune of Rs 24 crore. In this regard a case under section 420, 409, 419, 465, 467, 468, 471, 477-A, 120-B of IPC, section 43-A, 43 (i), 66, 66-D of IT Act and 7, 13 of prevention of corruption act had already been registered.



Dhama react strongly to Ram Rahim's announcement of opening Dera in Sunam



JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhama, reacting to the announcement of Dera Sirsa head of opening a Dera in Sunam, has demanded from the government to immediately stop his activities.

In an official statement here today, Dhama said that the character of Dera Sirsa head Gurmeet Ram Rahim is anti-social and the charges leveled against him are heinous. Convicted in rape and murder cases, Ram Rahim is also the main accused in sacrilege cases. He said that the announcement by this controversial person to open a dera in Punjab has hurt the Sikh sentiments and this may spoil the peaceful atmosphere of Punjab. He said that the Punjab government should play its role responsibly on this very serious matter and resolve that no branch of Dera Sirsa is established in Punjab. The SGPC President said that the Sikh mentality is being hurt by repeatedly granting parole to Ram Rahim, who is imprisoned due to his bad character and crimes and it is a conspiracy to now announce the opening of his Dera in Sunam.

NOC will be provided in 5 days under Tatkal

CHANDIGARH: To save the people of Punjab from disputes and litigations during the purchase and sale of property, Finance Minister Advocate Harpal Singh Cheema and Revenue Minister Bram Shanker Jimpa while chairing a high-level meeting on Thursday decided to reduce the NOC process from 21 days to 15 working days.

During this meeting held here at Punjab Bhavan, on the suggestion of Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema, it was also decided that NOC would be issued in 5 working days under Tatkal for the convenience of NRIs and other such persons who need it in a short time span. The Finance Minister said that under Tatkal, NRIs or those persons who could not spare more time, would be able to get this facility in 5 days by paying some extra fee.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet Ministers also decided to provide login ID and password to the sub-registrars of the revenue department to check the originality of the NOC at the time of registration. This will help in fixing the responsibility of the concerned officer in case of any registration done using a fake NOC. This would also help in expediting the process of registering criminal cases against the frauds.

In the meeting it was decided to issue new licenses of Deed Writers for the convenience of the people. Along with this, it was also asked to ensure that every Deed Writer should display the instructions issued by the Punjab Government from time to time for the information of property sellers and buyers, and the concerned Tehsildars to ensure the same by conducting random inspections.

Sizeable crowd of devotees paid obeisance at Sri Harmandir Sahib on occasion of Festival of Lights

JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

Thousands of devotees on the occasion of festival of light 'Diwali' here on Monday have paid obeisance in the sanctum sanctorum of Golden Temple the most visited sacred Sikh shrine. However, since early morning at 2.30 a.m onwards devotees were seen queued up to pay obeisance in the sanctum sanctorum of the Golden Temple and at Akal Takht (Highest Sikh Temporal Seat). At 2.30 A.M the look of illuminated Golden Temple was enormously wonderful with the heavy lighting arrangements. Bunting (burning of crackers) arrangements have also made around the sanctum sanctorum for evening.

Before paying obeisance in the Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) devotees took holy dip in the water pond of Temple at the marbled periphery with belief that that holy dip



would wash away their all bad deeds of previous births. Special arrangements to facilitate the devotees were made by the management of the Golden Temple. LANGAR (Community Kitchen) have made elaborate arrangements of food for more than four lakhs devotees who would stay in the Golden Temple throughout the night. Heavy task force of SGPC (Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee) was deployed in the periphery of the Golden Temple to facilitate the

Increase in consumption of milk & milk products in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

Haryana state known for production as well as consumption of milk in the country in past years has witnessed further increase in past couple of years as well as during current year. Information reveals, the consumption of ghee in the state in past few months has also increased by nearly 30%, whereas consumption of other milk products which include butter milk (lassi) has increased by 48.80%, consumption of curd increased by 54.50% and consumption of milk increased between 7 to 10%.

Information reveals, Haryana

state leads in per capita consumption of milk in the country in which Haryana state government federation has played important role due to its policies in branding, packing, quality and marketing through a network of retail outlets and VITA booths in rural as well as in urban areas, also having contract for procurement of milk through a chain of milk societies in rural areas as a result the sale of milk has witnessed increase by more than 7% whereas in case of other

products like ghee, curd and butter milk sale increased up to 55% in past about a year. Talking to media persons Dr Banwari Lal State Cooperative Minister told that state milk federation has played an important role to boost status of VITA milk and milk products and it is due to the efforts sale as well as profits witnessed good results having sale worth Rs 1505 crore during year 2021-22 as compared to sale worth Rs 1159 crore during year 2019-20. Federation has further modified manufacturing structure by installation of hi-tech machinery in its plants at Ambala and other places in the state.



9000 kg adulterated milk products, sweets destroyed during raids in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

Talking to media persons Haryana Home & Health Minister Anil Vij disclosed that teams of CM Flying Squad, Food Safety and Food Supply departments along with police collected 848 samples of food products and sweets from different towns in the state during raids and destroyed nearly 9000 kgs milk, milk products and sweets found either adulterated or being prepared under unhygienic condition at the spot during present festival season so far which included 150 kg 'khoya' 3851 kg sweets and 4954 kg products used to manufacture sweets found spurious in quality destroyed at the spot. Collected samples were forwarded to the laboratory for testing. Vij said, stern action will be taken against those supply-



ing products found injurious to health. Out of 848 samples of food products collected in raids during present festival season included 30 samples collected at Ambala which included 2006 kg potato chips, 2310 kg gram flour destroyed by raiding teams at the spot. Similarly 75 kg cheese and 35 kg milk sweets collected through 30 samples at Bhiwani, 34 samples collected at Charkhi Dabri, 32 samples collected at Fatehabad in which more

than 70 kg milk products and sweets were destroyed at the spot. CM Flying Squads collected 38 samples at Faridabad, 83 samples collected at Gurugram in which 435 kg spurious quality noodles were destroyed at the spot. CM Flying Squad collected 37 samples at Hisar during raids and destroyed huge quantity of sweets. CM Flying Squads during 38 raids at the sweets shops at Jind collected 125 kg milk products found unfit for use and destroyed at the spot.

HAFED gets export orders for 20000 ton Basmati rice

SATISH HANDA

Its first time Haryana State Co-operative Supply & Marketing Federation Limited (HAFED) of Haryana government has recently received export orders for 20000 ton Basmati rice from Saudi Arab. Information reveals, Haryana state holding nearly 50% share in export of rice in the country at present. However, export of Basmati rice from Haryana was adversely affected in past two years due to epidemic outbreak in the country as well as in the world resulting rice exporters and farmers cultivated paddy crop suffered a lot in this period due to slump in the market. Whereas, as a result of improvement in systems and relief in economic conditions in the world the demand of rice in domestic markets as well as in export markets have returned on the track like previous years. Information reveals, rice produced in India, especially Basmati rice in Haryana is in much demand in gulf and European countries due to its favor and after a slump in market for a period of two years rice exporters in Haryana state are now getting plenty of export orders from gulf coun-



tries which include Saudi Arab, Qatar, Iran, Iraq, Behrin, Kuwait, UAE, Yaman, Oman and other gulf countries as well as from all European countries including Germany, UK, France, Italy, Spain and Ukraine as such farmers in Haryana state are expecting to recover all losses incurred in past two years due to crisis. The arrival of new paddy crops in grain markets in Haryana state has started and likely to start as such farmers as well as rice exporters are happy over good demand in domestic as well as export markets this year. According to Kailash Bhagat HAFED Chairman they are expecting good export orders for Basmati rice from other countries also this year and will procure quality Basmati rice from farmers in the state for exports. He told that minimum support price (MSP) of different quality of rice is fixed by the government on the basis of price in open market and farmers are

hopeful for better price of their paddy crop this season. According to information, arrival of limited quantity of Basmati variety 1718 has started arriving in grain markets in the state which is being sold at the rate Rs 3700 per quintal as against price Rs 3200 per quintal last year. The rate of another variety Basmati DP1401 too is available in grain markets in the state at the rate Rs 3750 per quintal at present which was being sold at the rate Rs 3100 per quintal last year. The rate of Basmati rice variety 1509 available in grain markets in the state at present at the rate Rs 3300 per quintal was sold last year at the rate Rs 2200 per quintal. Similarly, the rate of 'Pusa' variety Basmati rice being sold at present in grain markets at the rate Rs 3700 per quintal was available at the rate less than Rs 3300 per quintal last year. According to experts, the rates of Basmati produced in Haryana state is likely to reach much higher this season due to increase in demand not only in domestic markets but also all over in the world where ever the flavor of Basmati rice produced in Haryana reaching.

Pitch ready for Adampur Vidhan Sabha bi-poll likely to have triangular contest

SATISH HANDA

Pitch for Vidhan Sabha bi-polls at Adampur constituency in Haryana to be held on November 3 is ready likely to have triangular contest between candidates of prominent political parties: ruling Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), Congress and Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) in Haryana state. Former state minister Jai Parkash JP is contesting on behalf of Congress instead of Kurda Ram Nambardar expecting Congress ticket and later migrated to INLD when denied ticket by the Congress high command, now contesting bi-polls on behalf of INLD in this poll battle. Aam Admi Party (AAP) is also contesting poll in Haryana state first time and has offered ticket to Kartar Ram also a popular political leaders in the area but will have to face tough fight with the candidates of other political parties in this



race since AAP having new entry in Haryana state having limited influence over voters in the area. Bhavya Bishnoi son of Kuldeep Bishnoi former MLA on this seat resigned from Congress is going to contest present Adampur bi-polls on behalf of BJP and JJP presently have ruling government in Haryana state. Past scenario reveals that family members of former chief minister Late Bhajan Lal have been

winner over Adampur Vidhan Sabha constituency most of the time irrespective of candidate of a political party where the only issue remained candidate from Ch Bhajan Lal's family in which Late Ch. Bhajan Lal, his wife Jasma Devi, son Kuldeep Bishnoi, daughter-in-law Renuka Bishnoi contested and won this seat in past years in spite of being a candidate of political party in opposition and

Heroine of value worth Rs 3 crore seized with 2 arrests including woman

SATISH HANDA

The district police Rohtak on Wednesday arrested two persons including a woman during checking of vehicle in which both were travelling near a crossing at Sampla in Rohtak district and seized 1.5 kg heroine of value worth Rs 3 crore in international market lying in a plastic box kept under the seat as told by SP Rohtak Udai Singh Meena while addressing a press conference on Wednesday. He told that police department had received a secret input that two drug peddlers were on their way to Rohtak from Delhi purchased narcotic substances from Delhi. Meena told that after the information was received an intensive search operation was conducted on Delhi-Rohtak road which led to the arrest of accused Sonia, a resident of Anandpura Society near Jind bi-pass Rohtak and Lalit son of Balwan Singh a resident of Shastri Nagar Hisar driving a vehicle bearing registration no. T-1022-HR-7964 impounded by the cops along with drugs



kept in a plastic box under the side seat where female partner was sitting. Police registered a case no. 488.2022 under NDPS Act after both the accused were taken into custody by the police and produced in the court seeking police remand. SP said that the properties of the accused arrested by police are being attached and would be demolished if found built illegally. He told that a police team has been deputed to Delhi from where both arrested had procured heroine from a foreign national youth a resident of Dwarka at Delhi. During preliminary investigation both arrested admitted that they are procuring drugs from Delhi and supply in the area around Rohtak.

IDSA sets its footprints in Academics with its PG Diploma program in Direct Selling

FW DESK

The Indian Direct Selling Association (IDSA) works as an interface between the Industry and policy-making governmental bodies. It has a major role to play in the Indian Market place for the companies to stay focused on the consistency of progress, say directly or indirectly. Apart from several CSR activities and contributions of the industry to the Indian economy, it has set its footprints in academics as well. By introducing "direct selling" as a PG Diploma program in collaboration with Shoolini University, IDSA has become the world's second-largest-direct-selling association to link academics with the Industry.

Drug smuggling through darknet, cryptocurrencies increased: Shah

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that there has been an increase in drug smuggling through the darknet and cryptocurrencies, which is also responsible for terrorism.

The Home Minister made the remarks at a high-level regional meeting on drug trafficking and national security in Gujarat's capital Gandhinagar on Wednesday. Shah said that on the one hand narcotics are eating the youth like termites and on the other hand the illegal money coming from the narcotics trade nurtures terrorism.



major drug smuggling issues in western states include the increasing maritime smuggling of heroin from the west coast, illegal cultivation of narcotics such as opium, ganja, and poppy, use of couriers and parcels in drug smuggling, darknet

and increase in drug smuggling through cryptocurrencies.

Shah said that during the recent investigation of cases, new trends have emerged in drug trafficking in western states and necessary action needs to be taken to tackle these new trends.

The Home Minister said that among the states of the western region of the country, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa and the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu have a vast coastline, additionally Rajasthan and Gujarat share borders with Pakistan.

Shah said that there has been an increase in the smuggling of South Central Asian heroin through the sea route as well as the increasing cases of heroin smuggling through the Indo-Pak border is a matter of concern. Sharing details drug smuggling cases, the Home Minister said that from 2006 to 2013, a total of 1,257 cases were registered, while from 2014 to 2022, 3,172 cases were registered, which is a total increase of 152 per cent.

Vice President visits Sri Harmandir Sahib; calls it a 'glowing symbol of the sublime spiritual tradition of our great Gurus'

PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE MARTYRS OF JALLIANWALA BAGH

JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar



The Vice President, Jagdeep Dhankhar today visited Sri Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) at Amritsar and described it as "a glowing symbol of the sublime spiritual tradition of our great Gurus".

Dhankhar, who arrived in Amritsar on a day long tour, his first to the state of Punjab as the Vice President, termed "the peace, serenity, devotion and sense of service" at the Golden Temple as an "unforgettable experience", said in official release issued. Noting down his remarks in the visitors book, he paid rich tributes

to the Gurus and underscored that "Sri Harmandir Sahib has been emanating the message of love, humanity, compassion and brotherhood through ages."

During his visit, the Vice President had langar at the Golden Temple and took part in Sewa along with his family members. Thereafter, he visited the Jallianwala Bagh and paid floral tribute to the martyrs. Calling it a memorial of national importance, he said that it "poignantly reminds of the sacrifice

of martyrs to whom we are eternally indebted." Dhankhar also remarked that the best tribute to the martyrs is building "a prosperous, inclusive & self-reliant India they envisioned."

He also paid obsequies at Ram Tirath Temple known as Bhawan Valmik Mandir where he was also honored by the management of the Temple. Then the Vice President and his family had Darshan and performed Puja at Shri Durgiana temple and Shri Ram Tirath.

BSE launches Electronic Gold Receipts



NEW DELHI: Leading stock exchange BSE has launched Electronic Gold Receipt (EGR) on its platform, a move that will help in efficient and transparent price discovery of the yellow metal.

It introduced two new products of 995 and 999 purity during the Muhurat trading on Diwali and trading will be in multiples of 1 gram and deliveries in multiples of 10 gram and 100 gram, the exchange said in a statement.

The announcement came after the exchange last month received final approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) for introducing EGR on its platform.

BSE in February received in-principle approval from Sebi after which the exchange conducted several mock trading in the test environment for its members to facilitate trading in EGRs.

EGRs will cater to all market participants, which means that buyers and sellers on the exchange will include individual investors, as well as commercial participants along the value chain like importers, banks, refiners, bullion traders, jewellery manufacturers, and retailers.

"The launch of EGRs represents a significant milestone not only for the BSE but also for the global bullion industry. BSE is committed to continuously facilitating access to high-quality investment-based products and services for our stakeholders," Sameer Patil, CBO at BSE said on Monday.

The EGR platform will lead to greater assurance in the quality of gold supplied, efficient price discovery, and transparency in transacting. This can create a vibrant gold ecosystem in India by enabling actual fungibility of gold. India is the second largest consumer of gold globally with annual gold demand of approximately 800-900 tonne and holds an important position in the global markets.

The country has remained a price-taker in the global markets, and at present, does not play any significant role in influencing the price-setting for the commodity.

A platform for EGR infuses transparency in gold spot transactions, enables India to emerge as the price setter, and would eliminate existing market inefficiencies.

Former Hurriyat chairman Ansari passes away



SRINAGAR: Former chairman of the Hurriyat Conference and influential Shia leader Maulana Abbas Ansari died here on Tuesday. He was 86. "Maulana (Ansari) breathed his last at his Nawakadal residence in the old city on Tuesday morning," a relative of the deceased leader said.

He said Ansari was not keeping well for the past couple of months and was hospitalized for some time in September.

Ansari was the last chairman of the undivided Hurriyat Conference which split into two factions soon after his election as the head of the separatist amalgam in 2003.

He had stepped aside from active politics and his son Masroor had replaced him in Hurriyat as representative of Ittehadul Muslimeen party.

Prime Minister Modi to inaugurate various projects in Vizag on Nov 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Visakhapatnam on November 11 to inaugurate and lay foundations for various developmental and infrastructure projects.

Railway officials have received the communication that he will be in the port city to lay the foundation stone for Rs 400 crore Visakhapatnam railway station modernisation project. The same day he will lay the foundation stone or inaugurate projects undertaken by the Central government.

These include Rs 26,000 crore Visakhapatnam HPCL petroleum refinery expansion and modernisation project; first phase of modern, green new campus of IIM Visakhapatnam and cruise terminal in Visakhapatnam.

Prime Minister Modi is also likely to address a public meeting in the city the same day. Sources said this public meeting may be held at AU Engineering College grounds. Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan, Chief Minister



Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will participate in various programmes along with the Prime Minister.

District collector A. Mallickarjuna held a meeting with Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) commissioner Rajababu and other officials to review the preparations for the Prime Minister's visit.

Rajya Sabha MP GVL Narasimha Rao had recently called on the Prime Minister and invited him to visit Visakhapatnam to inaugurate and lay foundations for several developmental and infrastructure projects.

People of Gujarat will end 27-year of corrupt regime: Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann

Panchmahal (Gujarat): Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday asserted that people of Gujarat will usher a new era of politics by collapsing the political fortress of the BJP, which has been in power for the past 27 years, and ensuring a landslide victory of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) party in the upcoming assembly elections.

Addressing to a gathering here, Mann said it is crystal clear that the people of Gujarat have made up their mind to give mandate in favour of AAP by ousting the BJP from the power.

He said the Opposition is trying to malign AAP by dubbing it 'B' team of others but AAP is party of Gujarat's people and 130 crore of Indians.

"AAP is spearheading to make India number one by cleaning the decade-old filth in the system with their honest and pro-people approach."

Slamming the BJP for the miserable condition of common man in the state, Mann said the saffron party is responsible for plundering the wealth of the people.

"The people were deprived of basic facilities like education and health. But now people are ready to teach a lesson to the BJP in the upcoming assembly elections," he said.

Referring to the massive wave of change in favour of AAP in Gujarat, the Punjab Chief Minister said repeating the history of Delhi and Punjab, the common people of Gujarat will form the govern-



ment of AAP with a landslide margin.

The Chief Minister said the huge crowd in rallies was a testimony to fact that AAP will form government in Gujarat. He said the BJP has been baffled by massive response to the party in the state.

Reiterating that AAP will eliminate corruption from the system after forming the government in the state, Mann said foreigners ruled Indian for over 200 years but they would have also felt ashamed to witness that they could not match the loot what the ruling

leaders are doing currently in the country.

Taking potshots at the Congress for its MLAs shifting loyalty to the BJP, Mann said the Congress is not change but they are for exchange only. Their MLAs are ready to join other parties as they know ship of the Congress is sinking in the country.

The Chief Minister said at present the country is on the brink of political change and people are looking beyond traditional the Congress and the BJP parties. Earlier, there was no alternative to people but now they have an honest AAP party led by its soldier Arvind Kejriwal. He said that just like Delhi and Punjab, the wind of change is prevailing in this state too.

Jathedar Akal Takht gave message to Sikh Community to fight the challenges facing the Sikhs with unity

JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

Jathedar of Akal Takht Sahib, Giani Harpreet Singh congratulated the Sikh community on Bandi Chhor Diwas and gave the message to fight the challenges facing the Sikhs with unity.

In a press statement issued here today, said the so-called pastors are spreading pakhandwad (exorcism) in the guise of Christianity on the land of Punjab, and are converting and exploiting innocent Sikhs physically, economically, and mentally and the government's silence on this matter is a serious concern.

Giani Harpreet Singh also underlined the need to work together for the release of Bandi Singhs (Sikh political prisoners) and said that to open closed ears of the Indian government, the non-resident Indian (NRI) Sikhs should hold protests besides making efforts for the release of Bandi Singh through their governments.

He asked all the Panthic sides to work together for



strengthening Sikh organisations against the governments' attempt to weaken the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). He said that the religious, educational, and humanitarian activities of

SGPC are strengthening the society and efforts are necessary to make them more substantial.

Jathedar, Akal Takht Sahib said that for Panthic unity, only political unity is not important

but all sides of Panth should start constructive work/projects to take the Sikh community forward with a minimal work plan.

He questioned the misuse of social media and said that

if it is not used to defame each other, then only good work can be possible.

He said the governments failed to stop the deadly attack of drugs on society and therefore, there is a need to form village-level committees to solve this problem of failure of governments to stop the use of drugs and break the drug trade's organizational structure. «It is a matter of serious concern that the Centre and Punjab governments have not succeeded in stopping trade and use of drugs despite using all of their means and power», said Giani Harpreet Singh.

Expressing concern about the low interest in reading among Sikh children, he said that Panthic institutions should encourage children so that they succeed in competitive examinations and join the administrative, armed force, foreign, and other high services in the country and abroad, to be the honour of the community. He also asked to fulfill Panthic responsibility by helping needy children for their higher education.

India offers sweets to Pakistan on Diwali



JAGMOHAN SINGH Attari (Amritsar)

On the occasion of Diwali, Indian Border Security Force (BSF) here today offered sweets to its Pakistani counterparts.

BSF commandant rank officer along with his staff gave sweets to the Pakistani Rangers at 'Joint Check Post' (JCP) on Attari/Wagah border.

At the time of Sweet offering at JCP to Pakistan counterpart by BSF, both the forces were

looking relaxed as they hugged and shook hands with each other besides sharing pleasantries for a few minutes.

Forces on both sides were seen clicking photographs of each other's while wearing smile on their lips.

There are long coming traditions between India and Pakistan to offer sweets to each other on major religious festivals, like Eid, Diwali, similarly on Independence Days of both nations and India's Republic Day.

BKU creates dress code for its members



ALIGARH: Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) activists will now wear uniforms.

BKU national spokesperson Rakesh Tikait has asked its members to keep their identity separate from other farmers' outfits by following a dress code.

This, apparently, comes after a recent clash between the two factions of BKU in Muzaffarnagar.

"A dress code has been decided. If a BKU worker ever goes to an official meeting, talks to an officer, he will wear a green scarf, badge and green cap. Without insignia, no BKU

activist will participate in protests," Tikait said.

He further said, "In many south Indian states, the farmers' outfits wear a green scarf. So, this (dress code) will help you maintain your own identity. I appeal to all to follow the guidelines."

Letters in this regard have been sent to all members.

"It is a necessity to create an identity in the public domain. BKU workers can now be spotted in large gatherings. Also, our farmer organisation is popular and disciplined. We do not want anyone to take advantage of it," he added.

NCP, Shiv Sena-UBT to march with Congress' Bharat Jodo Yatra

MUMBAI: The Nationalist Congress Party and Shiv Sena-Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray will join the Congress' Bharat Jodo Yatra led by party MP Rahul Gandhi when it enters Maharashtra next month, party leaders said here on Wednesday.

While NCP President Sharad Pawar will join the BJJ, from the Sena (UBT), ex-minister Aditya Thackeray and other senior leaders are expected to mark their presence though the dates and venue are not yet announced.

A senior Sena-UBT leader, preferring anonymity, told to media that party chief Uddhav Thackeray is unlikely to take part in the BJJ owing to the current political situation here, but will deputee a high-level team of leaders to express solidarity with Gandhi and the Congress.

The BJJ with Gandhi leading the march on foot with many senior leaders, is slated to enter Maharashtra on November 7 and the party has organised two mega-rallies in Nanded



and Buldhana districts. With Gandhi's public rally scheduled in Nanded and then it will move onto Hingoli, Washim, Akola and Buldhana, where another rally will be held in Shegaon.

The BJJ will traverse a total of nearly 382 kms in the five districts in 13 days before entering Madhya Pradesh on the next leg on November 20.

Top central and state Congress leaders like President Nana Patole, Balasaheb Thorat, Ashok Chavan, Manikrao Thakre, Naseem Khan, and many more are engaged in the meticulous planning and engagements of Gandhi during the BJJ in the five districts,

where he will directly interact with the local people.

The three parties - which were part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government for two-and-a-half years before it collapsed on June 30 - will now come together for the first time through the BJJ.

Besides the Congress, NCP and Sena-UBT leaders, the BJJ will also see the participation of many other political and farmers groups, prominent individuals from different walks of life, social and non-political entities which will join and march together with Gandhi at various locations during the state sojourn.

Jammu and Kashmir: Chief of Defence Staff visits forward posts in Rajouri



FW DESK

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Anil Chauhan on Monday visited forward posts in Rajouri sector of Jammu & Kashmir and celebrated Diwali with soldiers posted on the frontlines.

He was accompanied by White Knight Corps Commander, Lt Gen Manjinder Singh.

Addressing the troops, Gen Chauhan exhorted them to carry forward the rich tradition of courage and valour of the Indian Army. He also emphasised the need for operational readiness

of the highest order.

Gen Chauhan was briefed by field commanders on the current operational situation and security scenario along the Line of Control (LoC).

He also reviewed the development of defence infrastructure and operational preparedness undertaken despite challenging terrain and weather conditions in the region.

The CDS also laid a wreath at Naman Sthal, the war memorial of Naushera Sector and paid his respects to the bravehearts who had laid down their lives in the service of the nation.



Small savings rates should be pegged higher

The Government recently increased the returns on a handful of small savings instruments for the ongoing October to December quarter by 0.1 to 0.3 percentage points. Popular investment avenues for the middle class such as the Public Provident Fund (PPF) and the National Savings Certificate were left out. On paper, the returns on these instruments are to be reset on a market-determined basis, with a spread of 0 to 100 basis points (one basis point equals 0.01%) over the yields on government securities with comparable maturities. That this has not been adhered to is evident even at a cursory glance, given the long pause between rate changes. Following interest rate hikes this year to curb inflation, government securities' yields have been shooting up. This month, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said that interest rates offered on various schemes in the current quarter are 44 to 77 basis points below the formula-implied rates. For households that have been grappling with 6%-plus inflation since January, punctuated by a few months of 7%-plus price rise, these meagre hikes are far from enough to lift sentiment.

The last time rates were hiked was in January 2019, just ahead of the Lok Sabha election. In March 2021, the Government had announced further cuts ranging from 0.4% to 1.1%, but withdrew the decision overnight, citing an 'oversight' amid a poll campaign for five States. However, even as a token gesture to voters in upcoming polls, this latest tweak in small savings rates does not make the cut. As the RBI's top brass warned earlier, negative returns have serious consequences for the economy if households, which are the biggest lenders, stop parking their savings in such fixed income instruments and banks. The next quarter should see a fairer and healthier reset of returns to negate inflation's dent on household savings.

LETTERBOX

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VINOD THOMAS SAYS THE EGYPT SUMMIT SHOULD FOCUS ON THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF DECARBONISATION

Move the needle on climate action

India and other developing economies are justifiably worried about the damage to growth from COVID-19, Russia's war in Ukraine, and the global economy's downturn. But these troubles pale in comparison with the climate catastrophe already resulting from the current trajectory of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, whose effects hit developing economies and the poor hardest. That is why it is imperative that COP27 — the United Nations' climate summit which opens in Egypt from November 6 — makes real advances to stave off the worst effects of global warming. This means going beyond COP21's important Paris agreement (2015) on national commitments to cut GHG emissions and COP26's notable Glasgow agreement (2021) to stem deforestation.

Despite nervousness in making bold commitments in these uncertain times, a breakthrough must be made in rectifying decades of lopsided emissions by rich countries. They are still unwilling to offset past excesses by extending the massive financing that developing economies need for climate action. Just as problematic is the continuous and heavy burning of fossil fuels by the top five emitters — China, the United States, India, Russia, and Japan — as well as Southeast Asian countries taken together. What is worse, many of their plans are woefully inadequate for reaching carbon neutrality by 2050 to help keep temperatures rise below 2°C as envisaged in the Paris agreement. COP27 would be a success if progress is made on both these issues. One way would be for the summit to name the countries that are most out of line and ask them to do more.

On the other hand, rich countries have already shown that they can mobilise vast resources to tackle global emergencies. They did this in the 2008–09 global financial crisis and spectacularly so in the \$15 trillion committed in 2020 (by



one estimate), by the major economies to fight COVID-19. But when it comes to climate change, rich countries are failing dismally in raising the UN-goal of at least \$100 billion annually in climate finance for developing countries. COP27 should move the needle on this vital area.

Reaching carbon neutrality by 2050 is the absolute minimum for all major emitters if unthinkable scenarios of global warming are to be averted. The reverberating message from COP27 should be that the price for achieving carbon neutrality is a fraction of the cost of having to adapt to an increasingly unliveable planet. Ahead of COP27, Singapore has announced that it will achieve net zero emissions by 2050, a powerful signal even if coming from a country with only 0.1% of the carbon footprint.

Advance the year for net zero

India's reliance on fossil fuels is extremely high. High GDP growth, India's biggest goal, just cannot be achieved in the face of runaway climate change. The

country has set a target date of 2070 for net zero. China is the world's leader in renewable energy, but its share of coal and gas in energy production remains over 70%, with the country continuing to finance massive fossil fuel-based infrastructure. China has announced net zero for 2060. India and China awkwardly weakened the goal of COP26 from a "phase-out" of coal power to a "phase-down". This, however, is the moment to advance their date for net zero to 2050. Energy is responsible for about three-fourths of GHGs in the air, and low carbon energy needs to lead the decarbonisation of the global economy. India's plan for decarbonisation, even if very gradual at present, will nevertheless need to see a massive switch to renewable energy. Electric power has made progress in adopting renewables in its energy mix, but a far bigger switch from fossil fuel is needed for domestic heating and cooling. Factors in the way of a more ambitious adoption of renewables such as solar and wind include the variability in their generation due to weather condi-

tions, weak transmission grids, and poor financial conditions of power distribution companies.

COP27 should call for the extensive use of markets to help shift the global economy to a low-carbon path. The summit could back a radical shift in countries adopting carbon pricing, for example, via a significant carbon tax on the source of pollution. It should reiterate the need for all countries to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies. In terms of climate financing, something similar could be done to what was achieved during the COVID-19 pandemic, when rich countries raised vast amounts of financing. Climate projects can be vastly scaled up by multilateral development banks, such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, all of which have strong climate-action mandates.

Based on the mixed track record of past summits, expectations may not be high for what COP27 may bring. One way that it could advance the climate agenda is by choosing commitments to be backed by UN-member states that will be seen by governments to be benefiting them — in terms of health and cleaner cities, to name just two examples — and putting their economies on a more environmentally sustainable path that alone can deliver national interests in these tense economic times. India has historically been a hesitant climate actor, not unlike other big emitters. COP27, which will be held at Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt (November 6-18), is a chance for the country to strongly back environmentally sustainable development in its national interest.

Vinod Thomas is a former senior Vice-President, World Bank, and Director General, Asian Development Bank. He is currently Visiting Professor, National University of Singapore. Views are personal



FEROZE VARUN GANDHI EXPLAINS WHY THE AIM OF A SCHEME SHOULD BE TO ENSURE BETTER PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

A dismal case of slashing schemes and cutting funds

Over the past three years, over 50% of existing central government-sponsored schemes have been discontinued, subsumed, revamped or rationalised into other schemes. The impact has been varied across Ministries. For example, for the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development, there are just three schemes now out of 19 schemes, i.e., Mission Shakti, Mission Vatsalya, Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0. Mission Shakti itself replaced 14 schemes which included the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' scheme.

In the case of the Ministry of Animal Husbandry and Dairy, just two schemes remain out of 12. Additionally, the Ministry has ended three schemes which include Dairying through Cooperatives, National Dairy Plan-II, etc. For the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, there are now three out of 20 (Krishonnati Yojana, Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Cooperatives and the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana), while there is little information on the National Project on Organic Farming or the National Agroforestry Policy. There may be some who believe that a reduction in government schemes is a notable achievement. But does this lead to better governance, through less government? Are we reducing the state to the bare bones? For schemes that exist, there are challenges such as funding cuts, disbursement and utilisation of funds. As of June 2022, Rs 1.2 lakh crore of funds meant for central government-sponsored schemes are with banks which earn interest income for the Centre.

The Nirbhaya fund (2013) with its focus on funding projects to improve the public safety of women in public spaces and encourage their participation in economic and social activities is an interesting case; Rs 1,000 crore was allocated to the fund annually (2013-16), and remained largely



unspent. As of FY21-22, approximately Rs 6,214 crore was allocated to the fund since its launch, but only Rs 4,138 crore was disbursed. Of this, just Rs 2,922 crore was utilised; Rs 660 crore was disbursed to the Ministry of Women and Child Development, but only Rs 181 crore was utilised as of July 2021. Yet, a variety of women-focused development schemes across States are being turned down or ended. Meanwhile, women continue to face significant risks while in public spaces.

Farmers have not been spared either with fertilizer subsidies having been in decline over the last few years; actual government spending on fertilizers in FY20-21 reached Rs 1,27,921 crore. In the FY21-22 Budget, the allocation was Rs 79,529 crore (later revised to Rs 1,40,122 crore amidst the COVID-19 pandemic). In the FY22-23 Budget, the allocation was Rs 1,05,222 crore. Allocation for NPK fertilizers (nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium) was 35% lower than revised estimates in FY21-22. Such budgetary cuts, when fertilizer prices have risen sharply after the Ukraine war, have led to fertil-

izer shortages and farmer anguish. How will we incentivise farmers to continue agricultural operations?

Employment programmes

It is the same story with the rural poor. The allocation for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) went down by approximately 25% in the FY22-23 Budget earlier this year, with the allocated budget at Rs 73,000 crore when compared to the FY21-22 revised estimates of Rs 98,000 crore. The Economic Survey 2022-23 has highlighted that demand for the scheme was higher than pre-pandemic levels as rural distress continues. Anecdotal cases show that actual funding disbursal for MGNREGA has often been delayed, leading to a decline in confidence in the scheme. The Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan (June 2020, for a period of 125 days) sought to provide immediate employment and livelihood opportunities to the rural poor; approximately 50.78 crore person days of employment were provided at an expenditure of approximately Rs 39,293

crore (against an announced budget of Rs 50,000 crore, Ministry for Rural Development). One must also note that the scheme subsumed 15 other schemes. With between 60 million to 100 million migrant workers who seek informal jobs, such a scheme should have been expanded.

Now to health-care workers. For Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA), who are the first responders, there have been delays in salaries for up to six months. Regularisation of their jobs continues to be a struggle, with wages and honorariums stuck at minimum levels.

There is one more example. Biodiversity has also been ignored. Funding for wildlife habitat development under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has declined: from Rs 165 crore (FY18-19), to Rs 124.5 crore (FY19-20), to Rs 87.6 crore (FY20-21). Allocations for Project Tiger have been slashed — Rs 323 crore (FY18-19) to Rs 194.5 crore (FY20-21). A pertinent question is about meeting climate change obligations in the face of funding cuts.

Rather than downsizing government schemes and cutting funding, one should right size the government. After the Goods and Services Tax reform, the Centre-State relationship has been transformed, with fiscal firepower skewed towards the Centre. Our public services require more doctors, teachers, engineers and fewer data entry clerks. We need to build capacity for an efficient civil service to meet today's challenges, i.e., providing a corruption-free welfare system, running a modern economy and providing better public goods. Rather than having a target of fewer government schemes, we should raise our aspirations towards better public service delivery.

Feroze Varun Gandhi is a three-time Member of Parliament from the Pilibhit Lok Sabha constituency in Uttar Pradesh

BOOKS: REVIEW

Entrepreneurship and healthy life keeps a man going: Book

The renowned entrepreneur and cloud expert, a respected and trusted name in the cloud industry and the city of Nashik, Mr. Piyush Somani has launched his 2 books sharing his entrepreneur and health transformation journey.

Marking his debut as an author the books titled 'Living in Harmony with the Sun' and 'Entrepreneur with a Fire Within' were launched at Nashik. Piyush is heading as the Chairman and Managing Director of ESDS Software Solutions Ltd., a cloud computing and data center services company.

Piyush Somani laid down the foundation of ESDS at the very young age of 23 intending to build

an organization that empowers, respects, and nurtures its employees.

Hailing from a middle-class family in the small town of Nashik in Maharashtra, Piyush in his book 'Entrepreneur with the Fire Within' has shared his story of real-life experiences, achievements, setbacks, and rollercoaster of emotions, and everything in between as a passage of wisdom for budding entrepreneurs. In his second book 'Living in Harmony with the Sun', Piyush shared his journey to a healthy mind and healthy body.

A man of simplicity, he believes in discipline and adheres to it entirely, this transformation has helped him connect to nature better and understand how the Sun

'I am sure the book 'Entrepreneur with a Fire Within' will inspire and motivate lots of young people. I wish Piyush and Komal all the very best for this launch'

helps us lead a healthier life and how much we can learn from it. To grace this event Yuvraj Sambhajiraje Chhatrapati - former member of Rajya Sabha, Shri Swami Shrikanthanand - National Head, Sri Ramakrishna Arogya Sansthan, Narendra Goliya - CMD Rishabh Instruments, Sudhir Mutalik - President, North Maharashtra Zone of CII and CMD of Positive Metering Pumps, Dr. Jayant Chopade were present



Living in Harmony with the Sun
By Piyush Somani
Bluerose Publishers
135 pages, Rs170s

helpful to all young professionals aspiring to start their own businesses and want to make big in life. I am sure the book 'Entrepreneur with a Fire Within' will inspire and motivate lots of young people. I wish Piyush and Komal all the very best for this launch."

On this eve of the wonderful event, Mr. Piyush Somani shared his happiness and said, "The journey of writing these books has been very special. Both of the books are very close to my heart, I would like to thank each and every one who has been a part of this marvellous journey and helped to make it all the way here. I encourage everyone along with young entrepreneurs and professionals to take out time and read these books, understand, learn from them, and hopefully gain the knowledge that will help you in life. The world is changing in a blink of an eye and to live a happy life one must make their mind healthier first."

Elon Musk says won't fire 75% of Twitter staff as he finalises deal

SAN FRANCISCO: Tesla CEO Elon Musk has told Twitter employees that he is not going to lay off 75 per cent of the workforce when he takes over the micro-blogging platform.

Reports earlier mentioned that Musk will fire 75%, or 5,600 employees, from the Twitter staff globally.

Musk, who visited Twitter headquarters in San Francisco with a sink in his hands late on Wednesday, cleared to the employees that he will not sack so many people, reports TechCrunch.

Musk has casually mentioned laying off Twitter staff in his tweets, without sharing



any figure.

Twitter employees are still anxious about expected staff cuts as part of the takeover, which is likely to be closed on Friday.

According to The Wall Street Journal, banks and lenders have started to send \$13 billion in cash backing Musk's \$44 billion takeover of Twitter.

"Once final closing conditions are met, the funds will be made available for Musk to execute the transaction by the Friday deadline," the report mentioned. Musk must complete the acquisition by Friday or face the lawsuit at a court in Delaware, as per the deadline given by the judge.

Meanwhile, reports said that Twitter employees had written an open letter to the board of directors and Musk, criticising his plans to lay off 75 per cent of the workforce.

Twitter has told employees in an internal message that they would hear directly from Musk on Friday.

Spicejet to operate with full capacity in winter schedule



Airline SpiceJet will operate with full capacity in the winter schedule starting from October 30 this year. As per the domestic winter schedule of airlines released by the aviation regulator DGCA, the airline can operate with full capacity.

Scheduled airlines will operate 21, 941 flights on domestic routes every week in the winter schedule starting from October 30. The number of weekly flights will be 1.55 per cent lower than 22, 287 flights operated in the previous winter schedule.

On July 27, the DGCA restricted SpiceJet to operate a maximum of 50 per cent of its flights, which were approved in the summer schedule for a period of eight weeks due to a series of incidents involving its flights. "In view of findings of various spot checks, inspections and the reply to the show cause notice submitted by SpiceJet, for continued sustenance of safe and reliable air transport service, the number of departures of SpiceJet are restricted to 50 per cent of the number of departures approved under Summer schedule 2022 for a period of eight weeks," the DGCA had said in its July 27 order.

Walmart reportedly raising up to \$3 bn for Flipkart to expand India biz

Retail giant Walmart is reportedly raising up to \$3 billion for its e-commerce giant Flipkart to further expand its operations in the country.

With new funds, Flipkart's valuation is set to soar to more than \$40 billion, giving a fillip to the Indian funding scene which is going through a harsh winter.

Flipkart Group in July last year raised \$3.6 billion to grow and advance the digital commerce ecosystem in India. The investment valued the group at \$37.6 billion post the money then.

According to media reports, Walmart may bring strategic investors into Flipkart via this fundraising.

The move, according to close sources, is to keep Flipkart ahead in the e-commerce race as online shopping surges with every festive season in the country.

Reached for a reaction, a Flipkart spokesperson told IANS that "We do not comment on speculation". Walmart declined to comment.

The last fundraise demonstrated significant interest from global investors, including sovereign funds, private equity and crossovers



in addition to Walmart. It was led by financial investors GIC, Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPP Investments), SoftBank Vision Fund 2 and Walmart, along with investments from sovereign funds DisruptAD, Qatar Investment Authority, Khanah Nasional Berhad, and marquee investors Tencent, Willoughby Capital, Antara Capital, Franklin Templeton, and Tiger Global.

"This investment by leading global investors reflects the promise of digital commerce in India and their belief in Flipkart's capabilities to maximise this potential for all stakeholders," Kalyan Krish-

namurthy, Chief Executive Officer, Flipkart Group, had said in July last year.

"The quality of the investor group and valuation is further confirmation of global confidence in Flipkart and its mission to transform commerce in India," Judith McKenna, President and CEO - Walmart International, had said.

Bengaluru-based Redseer Strategy Consultants had predicted \$11.8 billion worth gross merchandise value (GMV) during the entire festive month up to Diwali. E-commerce marketplaces usually hold up to three sales leading up to the festival of lights.

The online retail platforms in India clocked \$5.7 billion (about Rs 40, 000 crore) worth festive sales between September 22 to 30, a robust 27 per cent (year-on-year) growth.

Mobile phones continue to lead the market with 41 per cent contribution in gross merchandise value (GMV) and nearly 56, 000 mobile handsets were sold every hour, according to the report by Redseer.

Flipkart Group (Flipkart, Myntra and Shopsy) continued to lead the market with 62 per cent market share in GMV.

and over 80 per cent of global operator-billed revenue will be attributable to 5G connections by 2027.

In addition, the ability of standalone 5G networks to offer 'network slicing' will act as the ideal platform for the growth of 5G private network revenue.

Standalone 5G uses next-generation core networks supporting network slicing technology, which can be used to take a 'slice' of public 5G infrastructure and provide it to private network users.

In turn, this helps mitigate the cost of private 5G network hardware and increase its overall value proposition, all against a background of deteriorating macro-economic conditions, the report said.

OPPO fastest-growing with 14% growth in Q3 among top 5 vendors in India

Global smart device brand OPPO on Thursday revealed it has emerged as the fastest-growing vendor (year-on-year) among the top five vendors in India, according to the Q3 2022 shipment report by market research firm Canalys.

OPPO India has showcased sustained momentum throughout the year with 14 per cent (YoY) growth and 7.1 million shipments in Q3 2022.

"In keeping with our brand proposition of 'Inspiration Ahead', we at OPPO are proud innovators in smartphone technologies. We have expanded our connection with our customers through a product ecosystem that makes their life convenient," said Danyant Singh Khanoria, Chief Marketing Officer, OPPO India.

"Our YoY steady growth is a testament of our consumers love for what OPPO brings to its products. We will continue to push the boundaries in technology and innovation to build cutting-edge devices for the Indian market," Khanoria said.

Over the years, OPPO India has launched a strong portfolio of devices across price segments featuring best-in-class technology to ensure that users stay ahead of the curve.

A testimony of this is the exceptional response received for Reno8 Pro 5G and Reno8 5G, which achieved a target of 105 per cent and 124 per cent, respectively, within the first three days of sales, according to the company.

"Further, the F Series offering a premium experience at

an affordable price has become a fan favourite among millennials. A perfect example of this is the 68 per cent growth clocked by F21 Pro in 2022," the company added. With the vision to make best-in-class tech more accessible, OPPO's K series has won the hearts of consumers across the country, and its K10 5G has become one of the country's most loved 5G devices. With the promise to give consumers the perfect smartphone experience, OPPO India has worked towards ensuring all their users experience 5G immediately after its implementation in India.

The brand has built a robust ecosystem of 5G devices across different segments which support 5G on a non-standalone

network. OPPO India also started working on updating the F21 Pro 5G and the K10 5G devices to support a standalone network since the beginning of September 2022 and complete the OTA update in line with the 5G rollout. Backed by a strong manufacturing unit in Greater Noida, OPPO India has also been declared a leader for 'Make in India' product shipments for two quarters consecutively in 2022.

The brand also launched the 'Vihaan' Project to empower SMEs and MSMEs to amplify their operations and, in turn, strengthen the local supply chain to build a robust smartphone ecosystem in India. Under this programme, OPPO India will be investing \$60 million in the next five years.

PM Modi pitches for indigenous products



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday emphasised on promoting indigenous products and self-reliance for prosperity, and said by adopting them, one can keep the art, culture and civilization of India alive.

Addressing a gathering to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Jain saint Vijay Vallabh Surishwar via video conference,

he said the message of 'swadeshi' and self-reliance is extremely relevant in the "Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal", a reference to the period till 2047, for India to become a developed country.

A commemorative postage stamp and coin dedicated to the saint was also released on Wednesday.

Paying tributes to the saint, Modi said when the world is

experiencing the crisis of war, terror and violence and is looking for inspiration to break out of this vicious circle, ancient traditions and philosophy coupled with the power of today's India is turning out to be a big hope.

He said the path shown by Surishwar and the teachings of Jain gurus is the solution to these global crises.

Mahatma Gandhi had also adopted the path of 'aparigraha' as laid down by Jain gurus, he said.

Also recalling Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the prime minister said Gujarat has given two Vallabhs' to the country and noted that Patel's birth anniversary will be celebrated on October 31.

'Statue of Peace', dedicated to the Jain monk, is one of the largest statues of saints and the 'Statue of Unity' is the tallest statue in the world, he added.

These are not just tall statues, but they are also the greatest symbol of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat', he said.

boAt raises Rs 500 cr to expand market share in smart-watches



Imagine Marketing Limited, the parent company of consumer electronics brand boAt, is raising Rs 500 crore from its existing shareholder, an affiliate of Warburg Pincus, a leading global private equity fund and new investor Malabar Investments. The investment, said the company, will enable it to accelerate its plans to attain leadership in the smartwatches category, scale up its business both within and outside India and further strengthen its R&D and design capabilities.

"The new funding will allow us to invest significantly to disrupt the smart watches spaces with more innovative products. And we are thrilled that investors continue to have strong conviction and confidence in the boAt story," said Aman Gupta, Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer, of boAt.

The company is making significant progress in diversifying its manufacturing footprint via partnerships with various leading electronics manufacturing services (EMS) players in India, including Dixon, with whom it has also created a manufacturing joint venture. A significant proportion of boAt's products are now being produced in India (1 million units every month currently).

The company said it is also planning to take the boAt brand overseas. "Through boAt labs (our 120-person in-house R&D team) and our acquisition of KaHa Technologies, (a world-class wearables technology and IoT platform, with 64 patents and patent applications), we are developing the next generation of products," informed Sameer Mehta, Co-founder and Chief Product Officer of boAt.

boAt closed FY 2022 with net revenue of approximately Rs 3, 000 crore with 100 per cent YoY growth.

5G service revenue to reach \$315 bn globally in 2023

The global 5G service revenue is expected to reach \$315 billion in 2023, rising from \$195 billion this year, a new report showed on Monday.

This represents growth of over 60 per cent in a single year for operator-billed 5G service revenue, according to Juniper Research.

"Despite the growth of the Internet of Things, revenue from consumer connections will continue to be the cornerstone of 5G operator revenue increase," said research co-author Olivia Williams.

Over 95 per cent of global 5G connections in 2027 will be connected personal devices such as smartphones, tablets and mobile broadband routers, "Williams added.

The increase in revenue will



be driven by the accelerating migration of cellular subscriptions to 5G networks; owing to operator strategies that minimise or remove any premium over existing 4G subscription offerings.

It forecasts over 600 million new 5G subscriptions will be created next year, despite the anticipated economic downturn in 2023.

The report predicts growth of 5G networks will continue,

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



There are some things that only humans can do well. Some of these unique functions include creative thinking, empathy, emotional quotient (EQ), and finding solutions to complex day-to-day problems.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is spreading rapidly and is becoming more powerful day by day than before. It is the mechanical form of the human brain, with the help of which many functions are being performed through computers, smartphones, and machines. Innovative applications of AI are emerging one after the other in medical science, computer science, and commercial processes. Your smartphone is called smart because it is powered by AI and the internet, and in the blink of an eye, you can do many impossible tasks with the help of this handy gadget. It is surprising that the smartphone alone has replaced many of the tools and technologies that had existed

over the years and thus has changed the lifestyle of people the world over. Now you do not wear a wristwatch to check the time and don't rely on the radio set or a tape recorder to listen to your favourite songs or music. The camera has already disappeared from the scene. The calculator also met a similar fate. The mobile phone alone is doing a lot of work now and behind it is the power of AI. There is so much about AI that no matter how many times it interferes in our lives, there are some things that only humans can do well. Some of these unique functions include creative thinking, empathy, emotional quotient (EQ), and finding solutions to complex day-to-

Machines can't be as creative as humans

day problems.

Children born in or after 1995 are now in their prime phase and are between the ages of 25 and 30. One thing is very clear in the case of these youths, who are also called Generation Z, that they depend excessively on the Internet. Because of this, while people of the previous generation relied on their memory for multiplication or daily calculations and did most of the counting with their minds, the youth of Gen Z could not walk a step without a smartphone or the Internet. They need calculators for simple addition and subtraction and the Internet for solutions to every problem, big or small. 40 per cent of the youth of this generation are those who spend more than four hours on the internet every day and use the internet to make their everyday decisions. This generation maintained contact with the outside world only through the Internet at the time of the Covid pandemic.



The period of the lockdown was such that it was not possible to go anywhere and mutual contacts were also broken, in such a situation, from ordering medicines to necessary video or zoom meetings, these youths kept the pace of work.

Generation Z sees the solution to every problem on the Internet and considers it to be the most effective and reliable source of information. With the introduction of different types of apps, their life has

become even easier. Whether ordering a pizza at 2 o'clock in the night or booking a flight or a hotel for a weekend outing, everything is done online and with full confidence; so what's the need to wander elsewhere? The disadvantages of being more online are also coming to the fore, such as one out of every three such youth has a problem of depression, anxiety or stress. Nevertheless, this generation prefers to participate in all kinds of social or commercial

events through social media. To build relationships, this generation also likes people who they have met through online mediums.

No matter how much you use mobile and the internet, living in a natural environment has its own benefits. In many countries in Asia and Europe, 80 per cent of school-children have been found to have poor vision. Due to modern living and high-calorie food, there were the problems of diabetes, obesity, and heart diseases, but now a problem of vision loss has emerged now. The reason behind this has been that today's children spend most of their time in low indoor light and are less exposed to sunlight outside. The loss of distant vision is called myopia. The problem of myopia remains with the person even at a later age. Such children lag behind in studies and are forced to wear costly contact lenses or eyeglasses. Apart from this, the disadvantages of excessive use of mobile phones are well known.

Mobile games like PUBG are making kids violent. Every day such reports come to the fore in which it is told that a child has shot his parents, teacher, or fellow children. One child used to administer his parent's intoxicating pills to play PUBG at night so that they could keep sleeping and the child continued to play violent games on his mobile unabated.

Outdoor sports have many benefits, but there are some indoor activities too which have a good effect on the mind and provide solutions to some medical problems. The drum playing is one such activity that has a medical benefit in addition to music. Recent research conducted at King's College London has shown that drumming can prove to be very useful for children who are suffering from autism and whose brain and other body parts are not in proper coordination. While playing drums, a person's brain, hands, and feet all work together, so drumming was shown to improve

the physical condition of children having autism. Drumming increases functional connectivity in the brain.

Advertising is of great importance in the market and business. Advertisements serve to provide information for common citizens. That's why people like to watch advertisements on TV or mobile. It often takes a lot of money and effort to create an advertisement that lasts for a few seconds or minutes. The reason is that in a few seconds, the key message has to be conveyed to the audience, which a movie can convey in a couple of hours. But advertising liquor by showing a soda bottle or advertising gutkha by showing cardamom is fraudulent. This is called surrogate advertising, which is done covertly to avoid legal action. The Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs has issued guidelines to check such misleading advertisements.

The author is a senior journalist and columnist, views are personal.

Reserve Bank's Monetary Policy Committee to discuss inflation report on November 3

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank will hold a special meeting of its rate-setting committee on November 3 to prepare a report for the government on why it failed to keep retail inflation below the target of 6 per cent for three consecutive quarters since January.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das will prepare the report on reasons for failure to meet the inflation target as well as the remedial measures the central bank is taking to bring down prices in the country.

"Under the provisions of Section 45ZN of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act 1934... an additional meeting of the MPC is being scheduled on November 3, 2022," RBI said in a statement on Thursday. Section 45ZN of RBI Act deals with failure to maintain the inflation target. RBI Act mandates that in case the inflation target is not met for three consecutive quarters, the central bank has to submit a report to



the government explaining the reasons and detail the remedial actions it will be taking to check the price rise.

This will be the first time since the monetary policy framework came into effect in 2016 that RBI will have to explain its actions to the government. As per the mandate given to RBI by the Union government, the central bank is required to ensure retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

Inflation had overshoot the target for over three quarters during the pandemic also but

RBI did not have to provide an explanation to the government. It was because of a technical shortcoming in data collection as data was collected without visiting mandis because of pandemic-related curbs.

The retail inflation based on CPI has remained above 6 per cent since January 2022. It was 7.41 per cent in September. The MPC factors in retail inflation while deciding the bi-monthly monetary policy.

If the average inflation remains above the upper tolerance level or less than the lower tolerance level for any three consecu-

tive quarters, it is considered a failure on part of RBI in meeting the inflation targeting mandate.

Last month, Das said the central bank considers the communication to the government for missing the inflation targets as privileged communication and will not be making it public.

RBI has been aggressively raising the key interest rate since May in a bid to contain inflation. It has so far raised the short term lending rate by 190 basis points taking the rate to a nearly three-year high of 5.9 per cent.

Shashanka Bhide, Honorary Senior Advisor at National Council of Applied Economic Research, Delhi; Ashima Goyal, Emeritus Professor at Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai and Jayanth R Varma, Professor at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad are among the MPC members.

Apart from Das, RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra and RBI Executive Director Rajiv Ranjan are also MPC members.

Union FM review high inflation & weak rupee, says economic performance 'Impressive'

Even as economic growth and rising inflation remain major concerns for India, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman saying that these twin challenges would be in focus in the next Union Budget, the monthly economic review for September has said that country's economic performance has been "impressive" in the first half of 2022-23.

"Indian economic performance in the first half of 2022-23 has been impressive compared to the world. As measured by PMI composite index, the economic activity level was higher for India at 56.7 compared to 51.0 for the World level during April-Sept 2022," said the economic review which was released on Saturday by the Finance Ministry.

"While wholesale inflation has significantly reduced from its peak of 16.6 per cent in May 2022 to 10.7 per cent in September 2022 on account of moderating commodity prices and government measures, retail inflation remains above the RBI's upper tolerance band due to an uptick in food prices. However, food inflation is expected to moderate as the harvesting and



procurement seasons progress, thereby contributing to a declining headline retail inflation in the rest of the fiscal year," it said while elaborating on inflation.

"On the external front, the rupee has performed relatively well in first half of 2022-23 compared to other major economies, reflecting the strong fundamentals of the Indian economy." The rupee incidentally had touched a historic low of 83.18 earlier this week, even as Sitharaman said that she saw it more as a case of the dollar strengthening than the rupee falling.

The economic review for September 2022 however noted that "the country should be able to meet these challenges

and keep the economy growing steadily".

"Prudent macroeconomic policies that have served the country well since 2014 continue to remain essential. As is the case with battling in swinging conditions, balls well-left (policy errors avoided) will be as important as balls played well (policy decisions taken)," it said.

The Central government's continuous thrust on capital expenditure promotes broad-based growth by facilitating private sector capital formation. Significant pick-up in consumption has resulted in a more-than-proportionate jump in GST revenues, a more robust economic recovery could al-

low the collections to settle at an elevated level, proving the high revenue productivity of the broad-based consumption, the review further noted.

A well-capitalised banking system has led to an upswing in credit disbursement to the retail, industry and services segments.

"High-Frequency Indicators (HFIs) suggest a continued broadening of traction in services activity. E-way bills, in particular, point to the overall growth of inter-state wholesale and retail trade.

"Going forward, the pent-up demand in the services sector, combined with a strong economic outlook for India, will drive growth in the service sector," the review said. Service sector firms are positive about demand conditions, sales turnover, their hiring plans and the overall business situation they expect in third quarter of the current fiscal. However it cautioned that "even as India remains one of the bright spots in an otherwise gloomy global scenario where the dark clouds of recession gather, the country's fiscal and monetary authorities must remain watchful.

Indian Rupee touches 82.72 against US dollar

Indian rupee on Friday closed at 82.63 after touching a high of 82.72 against the US dollar. The Indian currency gave up its early gains due to higher dollar demand. Earlier this month, rupee had touched a record high of 83.18 against the dollar.

The investors' dim outlook on China and also on the overall global economy has impacted the rupee. Rupee's fate will also depend on the crucial Federal Reserve meeting on November 2, market watchers said. In addition to this, the ECB's soft comments drove market views that central banks will likely moderate the pace of monetary tightening. This was more so, after the Bank of Canada surprisingly announced a smaller-than-expected rate hike.

Auto-rickshaw, taxi fares hiked in Delhi



NEW DELHI: The Delhi government has approved a hike in auto-rickshaw and taxi fares in view of rising CNG prices in the national capital, according to an official statement on Friday.

According to the revised fares, the meter down charge (minimum fare) for the initial 1.5 kilometre for auto-rickshaws has been increased from Rs 25 to Rs 30, while the per kilometre charge after meter down has been hiked from Rs 9.50 to Rs 11. For taxis, the per kilometre charge after meter down has been hiked from Rs 14 to Rs 17 for non-AC vehicles and from Rs 16 to Rs 20 for AC vehicles. The last revision in the auto-rickshaw fares happened in 2020 while that for taxi which includes black-and-yellow taxi, economy taxi and premium taxi happened nine years back in 2013.

Bank of Canada increases policy interest rate

OTTAWA: The Bank of Canada has increased its benchmark interest rate by 50 basis points to 3.75 percent.

Given elevated inflation and inflation expectations, as well as ongoing demand pressures in the economy, the bank's governing council expected that the policy interest rate will need to rise further, the central bank said in a statement issued on Wednesday.

In the last three months, Canada's CPI inflation has declined from 8.1 percent to 6.9 percent, primarily due to a fall in fuel prices.

However, price pressures remain broadly based, with two-thirds of CPI components increasing more than 5 percent over the past year, the bank said.

The bank added that its preferred measures of core inflation were not yet showing meaningful evidence that underlying price pressures are easing.

The bank expected CPI inflation to ease as higher interest rates help rebalance demand and supply, price pressures from global supply disruptions fade, and the past



effects of higher commodity prices dissipate.

CPI inflation is projected to move down to about 3 per cent by the end of 2023, and then return to the 2 per cent target by the end of 2024.

According to the bank, the Canadian economy continued to operate in excess demand and labour markets remain tight.

The effects of recent policy rate increases are becoming evident in interest-sensitive areas of the economy: housing activity has retreated sharply, and spending by households and businesses is softening.

The bank projected the country's GDP growth to slow from 3.25 per cent this year to just under 1 per cent next year and 2 per cent in 2024.

Quantitative tightening continues and is complementing increases in the policy interest rate, the Bank of Canada said.

Softbank-backed health unicorn Cerebral laying off 400 people

SoftBank-backed digital mental health company Cerebral is laying off about 20 per cent of its staff as it restructures its business.

According to The Wall Street Journal, nearly 400 people will lose their jobs, primarily clinical staff and care counselors. A memo from its CEO, David Mou said the cuts would affect employees across the company, including at headquarters and among clinical care staff and support workers.

"The changes are part of Cerebral's ongoing transformation programme, which drives to create more sustainable growth and stability, while further delivering our mission to democratise



access to high-quality mental health care for all," a Cerebral spokesperson was quoted as saying in reports.

"These changes are focused specifically on realising operational efficiencies while prioritising clinical quality and safety across the organisation," the spokesperson added.

The care counselors meet patients regularly to manage medications prescribed by cli-

nicians and provide support.

The company has come under scrutiny for making it easier to provide Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) medication to potential clients.

In April, a former Cerebral executive sued the company, alleging he was fired after voicing concerns about unethical prescribing practices and patient safety issues.

The San Francisco-based company has raised more than \$426 million to date, and was last valued at \$4.8 billion.

Earlier this year Cerebral laid off "hundreds" of people, primarily affecting its support and operations team to improve its programmes.

Rajnath Singh dedicates 75 infra projects from eastern Ladakh

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday dedicated to the nation 75 infrastructure projects including bridges, roads and helipads built at a cost of Rs 2,180 crore in strategically key areas of Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim among others.

He inaugurated the projects at a function held at the Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldi (DS-DBO) road that provides connectivity to India's northernmost outpost of Daulat Beg Oldi in eastern Ladakh.

The highlight of the event was the onsite inauguration of 120-metre-long 'class-70 Shyok Setu' on the DS-DBO Road at an altitude 14,000 feet, the defence ministry said.

The bridge will be of strategic importance as it will facilitate logistics movement of the armed forces. Other projects inaugurated virtually by Singh included two helipads, one each in Hanle and Thakung, in Eastern Ladakh, it said.

These helipads will enhance



the operational capabilities of the Indian Air Force in the region. The rest of the projects were inaugurated virtually by Singh.

The 75 projects included 45 bridges, 27 roads, two helipads and one 'Carbon Neutral Habitat' and they are spread across six states and two Union territories.

Twenty of the projects are in Jammu and Kashmir, 18 each in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, five in Uttarakhand and 14 in other border states of Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan.

Speaking on the occasion, the defence minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensure the progress of far-flung areas to fulfil the security needs of the country.

Singh noted that infrastructure development along with the valour of the armed forces was the main reason that helped India effectively deal with the recent situation in the northern sector, in an apparent reference to Indian military's response to Chinese PLA's aggressive behaviour in eastern Ladakh.

FM Nirmala Sitharaman asks States to ease logistics burden on exporters



Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh): Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday asked States to adopt a multimodal approach and ensure logistics did not become a burden on exporters.

She said the PM Gati Shakti was a beautiful protocol with which a synergy could be brought in.

Delivering the inaugural address after inaugurating the third campus of the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade in Kakinada, Sitharaman referred to 'One District-One Product' and 'Vocal for Local', initiatives, aimed at promoting local products and creating their export markets.

She said the Commerce Ministry was working on getting an export policy that would help the exporters by giving them incentives and promoting many things.

There's a repetitive and very relevant line that the Commerce Minister refers to. We can't be exporting taxes. We also should identify ways in which those taxes whether Centre, State or local that are on these products should be removed so that we don't burden their exporters, the Finance Minister said.

The governments did not get much revenue from those products but burdened the exporters nevertheless, she noted. She said the growing cost of electricity and logistics was also affecting the exports. With better roads and ports coming electronic facilitation for the customs operations coming surely, the logistics element is being addressed little by little. State governments should also spend some time to see that logistics doesn't become a burden on exporters, Sitharaman said.

The Finance Minister referred to the Prime Minister's suggestion that States should open export promotion offices in Indian embassies abroad. If you have the capacity to tell the kind of things you produce that are international class our embassies are the place where you should be and target the markets there. Some of our States are the size of some European countries. We have the capacity even as a district to capture the market outside, she said.

The 'One District-One Product' is an attempt to identify such products in each district that have a natural capacity, organic capacity. And 'Vocal for Local'. Those are the kind of products that capture international imagination and need to be supported, she added.

Sitharaman, who said she was speaking as a student of trade and not a minister, observed that trade-related courses should become a lot more nimble. She exhorted the IIFT students to have a comprehensive understanding of what was going on in the global trade areas.

"Multilateral institutions that govern trade have set the global norms. We should understand them. If anything, India's case should be put forward in a far more discerning, understanding way, she said.

Sitharaman asked students to widen their horizon and have a multi-disciplinary approach to studying trade. The Finance Minister asked the IIFT Vice-Chancellor to ensure the institution actively engaged in India's trade.

Wonderful brains are here. Use them to tell the Commerce Ministry how to go about it (foreign trade). You should be in the team of the Commerce Minister when he negotiates trade (with foreign countries), Sitharaman said.

She took a dig at the Indian economic service and Indian trade service officers for doing only a copy-paste job. You have Indian economic service and Indian trade service officers giving papers to the Minister, saying, Oh, minister can you please take this up? But, many a time I find them copy-paste. I am sorry to say this. The Minister doesn't get an advantage, Sitharaman remarked.

Andhra Pradesh Ministers Buggana Rajendranath, K Nageswara Rao, Ch S V Krishna, S A Raju, Rajya Sabha members G V L Narasimha Rao, P S Bose, Lok Sabha members V Geeta, M Bharat, MLCs, MLAs, and others attended the event.

The IIFT-Kakinada has been opened on a temporary basis on the campus of the Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University here. IIFT's own campus on a 25-acre site at the Kakinada SEZ would be built at a cost of Rs 230 crore.

Walkaroo inaugurates new manufacturing unit in K'taka

CHENNAI: Noted footwear brand Walkaroo International Ltd has inaugurated its new state-of-the-art manufacturing unit in Karnataka under its expansion plans, the Tamil Nadu-based company said on Friday.

The facility would be an exclusive manufacturing unit to produce polyurethane footwear in a bid to strengthen the PU footwear products offered by the company in southern parts of the country.

"We have been expanding our brand presence not only in India but also in the global footwear segment. As we continue to redefine and expand the affordable footwear segment in India, we broadened our portfolio with design technology..." company Managing Director VKC Noushad said.

The new unit besides serving the domestic market would also be used for exports, the company said.

Markets log gains for 2nd day on buying in Reliance

MUMBAI: Equity benchmarks ended higher on Friday helped by buying in index major Reliance Industries along with fresh foreign fund inflows.

Extending its previous day's rally, the 30-share BSE benchmark climbed 203.01 points or 0.34 per cent to settle at 59,959.85. During the day, it jumped 376.33 points or 0.62 per cent to 60,133.17.

On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 49.85 points or 0.28 per cent to end at 17,786.80. In the Sensex pack, Maruti, Reliance Industries, NTPC, Power Grid, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, Titan and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the major winners. Shares of Maruti climbed nearly 5 per cent after the company announced its earnings.

Maruti Suzuki India on Friday reported an over four-fold increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 2,112.5 crore in



the second quarter ended on September 30, 2022, riding on record sales. Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel, Sun Pharma, ICICI Bank and State Bank of India were among the laggards.

"Gains in index heavyweights helped the domestic market to withstand its gains

despite negative trends in its global peers. US tech stocks had a significant sell-off following disappointing quarterly results and a bleak forecast.

"However, the strengthening rupee along with a softening treasury yield and decent Q2 earnings results are sup-

porting the domestic market in the near term," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

The BSE smallcap gauge fell by 0.62 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.41 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, auto jumped 1.66 per cent,

energy climbed 1.20 per cent, oil & gas (0.76 per cent) and consumer discretionary (0.32 per cent). However, metal fell by 1.44 per cent, commodities declined by 1.08 per cent, IT (0.76 per cent), bankex (0.72 per cent) and telecommunication (0.55 per cent).

Meanwhile, the rupee declined by 15 paise to close at 82.48 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday.

Elsewhere in Asia, markets in Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading in the negative territory in mid-session deals. Wall Street had ended on a mixed note on Thursday.

International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.84 per cent lower at USD 96.15 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Thursday as they bought shares worth Rs 2,818.40 crore, as per exchange data.

Rishi Sunak: I will be unite Britain with action

In his first address to the nation via a televised statement in front of 10 Downing Street, now his official residence-cum-office as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Britain's first non-white, non-Christian head of government Rishi Sunak pledged: "I will unite our country not with words, but with action." He did not mince words about the "mistakes" made by his immediate predecessor, Liz Truss and said: "I have been elected as leader of my party and your Prime Minister in part to fix them." He added: "This will mean difficult decisions to come." Sunak promised that he will be as caring as he was as Chancellor of the Exchequer during the Covid pandemic, saying: "I will bring that same compassion to the challenges we face today." But he indicated the current generation of Britons



have to settle the country's debt, instead of leaving this for their children or grandchildren. At the end of his five and a half minute speech, he waved to the assembled journalists and camera crews before entering the historic door and building.

Earlier, British monarch King Charles III granted Sunak an audience at Buckingham Palace and formally

invited him to constitute a government. Sunak is the youngest Prime Minister of Britain in 200 years. He has risen to this position after only seven years in politics. He was previously an investment banker and hedge fund manager.

He is of Indian origin by virtue of his grandparents hailing from pre-partition India, though his parents were brought up in East Africa. He

Proud of him: Narayana Murthy on Rishi Sunak

NEWDELHI: "We are proud of him and wish him success," Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy said in his first comments on the elevation of his son-in-law Rishi Sunak as Britain's prime minister.

Sunak, 42, on Sunday won the race to lead the Conservative Party and is now set to become Britain's first prime minister of Indian origin. "Congratulations to Rishi. We are proud of him and we wish him success," Murthy said in first reaction emailed to PTI. "We are confident he will do his best



for the people of the United Kingdom."

The son of a pharmacist mother and doctor father, Sunak was educated at one of England's most renowned schools, Winchester, and then Oxford. He spent three years at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and later gained an MBA from Stanford in California, where he met his wife Akshata Murthy, daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy.

He married Akshata in 2009 and the couple has two daughters, Krishna and Anoushka.

himself was born in Southampton. His wife Akshata

Murthy, a businesswoman, is Indian.

Imran booted with 'ghari chor' chants

Former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was booed with 'ghari chor' (watch stealer) chants within the vicinity of the civil courts in Lahore.

In a video circulating on social media, the PTI chairman could be seen emerging out of a gate at the Civil Courts Lahore surrounded by his party workers and security personnel when people standing there started chanting the derogatory slogan with reference to the Toshakhana controversy, Geo News reported.

In the video, a PTI supporter accompanying Khan could also be seen shoving a man for chanting slogans.

Khan has granted a cheque worth 50 million PKR to the Lahore Bar and invited the lawyers to participate in his party's upcoming long march. Aside from that, the PTI chief also announced the provision of health cards to



lawyers and also promised to upgrade a hospital for them. Khan also said that a Lawyers' Protection Bill will be passed by the Punjab Assembly.

On October 21, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), in a consensus verdict related to the Toshakhana reference, disqualified Khan and ruled that the PTI chairman was no more a member of the National Assembly, reports Geo News.

"Criminal proceedings will be initiated against the PTI chairman for misdeclaration," the verdict said.

The ECP stated that Khan had submitted a false affidavit and was found involved in corrupt practices under Article 63(1)(p).

Under the said article, a lawmaker is disqualified for the time being from being elected or chosen as a member of the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) or of a provincial assembly.

Italian PM Meloni thanks Dalai Lama for affection



Newly elected Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni thanked Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama for the message of affection by him on her appointment. "I am honored by the message of affection that the Dalai Lama wanted to convey to me and the government. I take this opportunity to renew our feeling of friendship to him," she wrote to the Nobel Peace Laureate. The Dalai Lama greeted Meloni on becoming the Prime Minister, Italy's first woman premier, saying women are more empathetic and sensitive to the feelings of others. The Dalai Lama wrote to her, "Over the years, I have had the pleasure of visiting your country many times and have been touched by the affection and friendship shown to me by Italians from all walks of life. I am also grateful to those Italian brothers and sisters who have consistently supported the Tibetan people's aspirations for freedom and dignity."

Vietnam reports 260,000 dengue cases, 102 deaths this yr



HANOI: Vietnam has reported about 260,000 cases of dengue fever infections and 102 deaths so far this year, the Ministry of Health said. The number of infections and fatalities grew nearly five times from the same period in 2021, the Ministry said, adding that "major outbreaks" are likely to occur in many provinces and cities in November and December, reports Xinhua news agency. Ho Chi Minh City is still the hotspot with nearly 70,000 cases and 29 deaths. The capital Hanoi has seen more than 8,000 cases with 12 deaths. Besides dengue, Vietnam has also witnessed the complicated developments of other diseases recently.

Joe Biden thanks Indian-Americans as he hosts Diwali event at White House

NEW YORK: Hosting a Diwali reception at the White House, which was attended by more than 200 prominent Indian-Americans, US President Joe Biden thanked the community for making the festival of lights a joyous part of the American culture.

More than a billion Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists celebrated the festival of lights in the US, India, and around the world on October 24.

"We are honoured to host you. This is the first Diwali reception of this scale in the White House ever to be held. We have more Asian-Americans than ever before in history and we want to thank you for making the Diwali celebration a joyous part of American culture," Biden said while addressing the Indian-origin community at the East Room on Monday.

With a population of more than 4.5 million, Indian-



Americans make up 1.4% of the US population and are the largest group of South Asian-Americans.

Biden, along with First Lady Jill Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, thanked the South Asian community across America for their optimism, courage, and empathy.

"Together, South Asian Americans reflect the soul of who we are as a nation, wheth-

er helping us emerge stronger from this pandemic, building an economy that works for everyone, or serving and protecting our communities and our country," Biden said.

A record 130 Indian-Americans are in key positions of Biden administration -- the best representation from the community that makes up around 1 per cent of the American population.

Canadian PM Justin Trudeau greets Sikhs for celebrating 'Bandi Chhor Divas'



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has greeted the Sikh community on the occasion of Bandi Chhor Divas.

In an official statement issued on Monday, the Prime Minister said: Today, we join Sikh communities in Canada and around the world to celebrate Bandi Chhor Divas. On this holiday, Sikhs commemorate the story of Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, who was imprisoned in 1619 at Gwalior Fort. "When given the chance to be liberated from prison, the Guru refused to be released without the 52 innocent kings who were imprisoned alongside him. Ultimately, he succeeded at freeing himself and the kings." "Today, families and friends will gather to pray,

feast, and light candles at their homes and gurdwaras as symbols of hope, guidance, and freedom. On Bandi Chhor Divas, we reflect on the importance of standing in solidarity with those around us facing injustice, and the importance of serving those in need.

"This celebration is also an opportunity to recognize the important contributions that Canadians of the Sikh faith have made -- and continue to make -- to building a stronger Canada. On Bandi Chhor Divas (prisoner liberation day), the sixth Sikh guru, Sri Guru Hargobind, returned to Amritsar after being released along with 52 princes from imprisonment by the Mughal emperor Jahangir from Gwalior prison in 1619.

'Pak should also lay claim on Rishi Sunak because his grandparents were from Gujranwala'

Former British Chancellor Rishi Sunak is set to make history by becoming the first Hindu and first person of colour to become the UK's next Prime Minister.

The 42-year-old was born in Southampton to Hindu-Punjabi parents but his grandparents were born and raised in the city of Gujranwala in Punjab province, Geo News reported.

Sunak, in an odd way, is both an Indian and a Pakistani by heritage. He is a practising Hindu and takes his Commons oath on the Bhagavad Gita.

His paternal grandfather Ramdas Sunak left Gujranwala to work as a clerk in Nairobi in 1935. His wife, Suhag Rani Sunak, moved to Delhi first from Gujranwala, along with her mother-in-law, before travelling to Kenya in 1937 to join her husband. Ramdas and Suhag Rani had six children, three sons and three daughters.

Rishi Sunak's father Yashveer Sunak was born in 1949 in Nairobi. He arrived in Liverpool in 1966 and went on to study medicine at the University of Liverpool. Yashveer married Usha in Leicester in 1977.

Three years later, Rishi was

born in 1980 in Southampton. His parents ran a successful pharmacy business till their retirement. "The Sunaks are a Punjabi Khatri family from Gujranwala, now in Pakistan," said a Twitter user, adding: "Ramdas Sunak, Rishi's paternal grandfather, left Gujranwala to work as a clerk in Nairobi in 1935". As soon as it became clear that Rishi will become the next Prime Minister, Pakistani netizens on Twitter laid claim to the incoming British leader.

"I think Pakistan should also lay claim on Rishi Sunak because his paternal grandparents were from Gujranwala who from there migrated to Kenya and then to Britain," one user tweeted. Another said: "Wow! What a tremendous achievement. A Pakistani has now ascended to the highest office in England. Anything is possible if you believe." Some suggested that it was a moment of joy for both India and Pakistan.

"Going to bed in the US with hopes that a Punjabi from Gujranwala will be the prime minister of the UK in the morning! Both Pakistan and India should be jointly proud of this moment!"

one user said. "Since Gujranwala is in Pakistan, anyone who belonged to this city even 100 years ago is a Pakistani today," tweeted another. Gujranwala, known for its good food and culture of wrestling, is located about 1.5 hours from Lahore.

Before partition, when Rishi's grandparents used to live in Gujranwala, the city used to be a locality surrounded by at least seven gates, used as entry and exit points to it, Geo News reported. Today's Gujranwala is a congested, densely populated city surrounded by narrow streets, filled with shops of clothes, jewellery, electronics and others. Before partition, the city had a large and thriving Hindu community. When the communal riots erupted in British India (today's India and Pakistan), many Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were forced to migrate and relocate. Many Muslim and Hindu families left today's India and Pakistan for Kenya and other countries, Geo News reported.

In Britain, Asian and rights groups have hailed the rise of Rishi as hopeful and the dawn of a new era.

The development of the GKPTN was made possible through a generous grant from AstraZeneca and serves as a clear example of a true research partnership.

Over the past 3 years, I've spoken to countless Bramptonians and the sentiment I hear is that they are all hurting, they feel unheard, they feel left behind. With the rising cost of living it's getting harder to raise and provide for your family in Brampton... As your city councillor I will fight for better services for all Bramptonians and ensure that your voices are heard. "Brar had said in her campaign pitch. Brar previously ran as the Ontario NDP candidate in Brampton West, losing out to incumbent Progressive Conservative MPP Amarjot Sandhu.

Another Sikh candidate, Gurpartap Singh Toor,

Indian-origin Labour MP Nadia's tweet on Rishi Sunak sparks outrage



demonstrate that effective political representation of British Asian communities -- and the interests of all working people -- is about far more than the ethnicity of the prime minister."

Labour Party leader Keir Starmer, meanwhile, "welcomed" the appointment of Sunak as "the first British Asian Prime Minister", describing it as a "real milestone for our country". But on being pressed by the Sky News on Wednesday to comment on the issue, he said: "The position of the Labour party is the position that I have set out. The whole Labour Party supports that, and we're very, very pleased to do that."

Whittome, a staunch critic of Sunak, had earlier tweeted: "Rishi Sunak and his wife sit on a fortune of 730,000,000 pounds. That's around twice the estimated wealth of King Charles III. Remember this whenever he talks about making 'tough decisions' that working class people will pay for."

Canadian city gets first turban-wearing Sikh woman councillor

TORONTO: Indo-Canadian healthcare worker Navjit Kaur Brar has become the first turban-wearing Sikh woman to be elected as Brampton City Councillor in the recent Municipal council polls.

Brar, a respiratory therapist and a mother of three, won the race for City Councillor in Wards 2 and 6, beating Jermaine Chambers, a former Conservative MP candidate for Brampton West.

Brar had 28.85 per cent of the votes cast on Monday with Chambers as nearest contender with 22.59 per cent, and Carmen Wilson coming in third at 15.41 per cent, the Brampton Guardian reported.

"I am so proud of @Navjitkaurbrar. She was a selfless and dedicated front line healthcare worker during the pandemic. She has stepped up for public service and I am confident she will be a phenomenal addition to Brampton City Council," tweeted Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown, who won a second term in recent election. As part of her campaign she knocked over 40,000 doors and spoke to over 22,500 residents in the last two months.

"Over the past 3 years, I've spoken to countless Bramptonians and the sentiment I hear is that they are all hurting, they feel unheard, they feel left behind. With the rising cost of living it's getting harder to raise and provide for your family in Brampton... As your city councillor I will fight for better services for all Bramptonians and ensure that your voices are heard. "Brar had said in her campaign pitch. Brar previously ran as the Ontario NDP candidate in Brampton West, losing out to incumbent Progressive Conservative MPP Amarjot Sandhu.

Another Sikh candidate, Gurpartap Singh Toor,



knocked off his opponent Gurpreet Dhillon in Wards 9 and 10 by a scant 227 votes.

As many as 40 Punjabis were in the fray for Brampton civic elections, according to local media reports.

Out of 354,884 eligible voters in Brampton, only 87,155 of them turned up to cast ballots -- an abysmal voter turnout of approximately 24.56 per cent, according to unofficial results, The Pointer reported.

The Indo-Canadian community, along with the councillor candidates, had raised concerns over the election date overlapping with Diwali -- one of the most-awaited festivals celebrated by the large swathe of Indian diaspora present in the North American country.

"It is very problematic that the elections are taking place on the Diwali day, especially the municipal election that has always seen a low voter turnout," Gurpratap Singh Toor, who has won Wards 9 and 10, had told Omni Punjabi. Elections for municipal government are held every four years on the fourth Monday of October, which fell on October 24 this time. These polls usually elect a mayor and city council and sometimes also a school board. Around 40 per cent of Brampton's population is South Asian, and the municipal election also fell on the religious festival of Diwali, celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains.

George Clinical Recruits More than 5,000 Patients in the Global Kidney Patient Trials Network

FW DESK

Clinical, in close collaboration with The George Institute for Global Health, has recently announced the recruitment of more than 5,000 patients in its ground-breaking, first of its kind, Global Kidney Patient Trials Network (GKPTN) which will accelerate treatments for kidney disease. The concept for the GKPTN is a logical extension of George Clinical's scientific and clinical operations leadership in the kidney space. In early 2020, the GKPTN enrolled its first patient with the purpose of developing a network of patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) willing to participate

in clinical research projects accessible through a single global chronic kidney disease platform. The GKPTN now has more than 140 sites in nine countries globally recruiting patients including Australia, China, Japan, USA, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Spain and Italy with the full intention of continuing to expand the number of countries in the coming years.

The GKPTN aims to accelerate the development of new treatments and provide equitable benefits for the millions of people globally who suffer from chronic kidney disease and the many rarer kidney diseases associated with glomerular nephropathies. It



is the rarer diseases that have seen increased focus of late from drug developers in the race to find treatments for these underserved patients. Responding to the needs of

the researchers in the kidney space, George Clinical has made a commitment to prioritize the recruitment of patients into the network with these more rare glomerulonephropathies while still remaining focused on the development of a master protocol under which future CKD trials can be run in a more efficient manner.

George Clinical Chief Medical Officer, Maria Ali noted "Our ultimate goal is to grow the GKPTN to a total of 10,000 patients by the end of 2027 which will give us the bandwidth to support dozens of clinical trials in the kidney space. We are well on our way to achieving our goals as we seek to provide the infrastructure necessary to make recruitment timelines shorter and reduce the time to get needed treatments to patients."

There are a number of trials currently being supported by

the GKPTN which are targeting treatments for CKD and glomerulonephropathy and the network has the capacity to support many more simultaneous trials. George Clinical, as the leading CRO in the kidney space will have an expanded presence to engage those in the industry interested in leveraging the network at the upcoming 2022 ASN Kidney Week in Orlando and briefings with scientific leaders and operations leads will be available.

The development of the GKPTN was made possible through a generous grant from AstraZeneca and serves as a clear example of a true research partnership.

Over the past 3 years, I've spoken to countless Bramptonians and the sentiment I hear is that they are all hurting, they feel unheard, they feel left behind. With the rising cost of living it's getting harder to raise and provide for your family in Brampton... As your city councillor I will fight for better services for all Bramptonians and ensure that your voices are heard. "Brar had said in her campaign pitch. Brar previously ran as the Ontario NDP candidate in Brampton West, losing out to incumbent Progressive Conservative MPP Amarjot Sandhu.

Another Sikh candidate, Gurpartap Singh Toor,

Hrithik celebrates first Diwali with girlfriend Saba Azad



Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan celebrated his first Diwali with his girlfriend Saba Azad. Saba took to Instagram Story, where she posted a picture of herself along with Hrithik. The two can be seen twinning in white Indian outfits. She wrote: "Happy Diwali" as the caption for the loved-up image. Hrithik and Saba were first spotted together in February when the two stepped out for dinner. Putting all rumours to rest, the two were seen holding hands as they walked into Karan Johar's 50th birthday party.

On the work front, Hrithik's latest release is 'Vikram Vedha'. He will next be seen in 'Fighter', which also stars Anil Kapoor and Deepika Padukone.



Indian Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar with his wife Sudesh Dhankhar, poses for a photograph, paying obeisance at the Sri Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), on Wednesday. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL

POTPOURRI

NIA questions Punjabi singer Afsana Khan in gangster-terror nexus case

In a major development, the NIA has reportedly questioned Punjabi singer Afsana Khan, an associate of late Punjabi Singer Siddhu Singh Moosewala, in the gangster-terror nexus case. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has found a link of the Punjabi pop industry in the case, and questioned Khan.

Recently, the NIA conducted a nationwide raid at the hideouts of several gangsters. During the raid, the agency found certain links connected to the Punjabi pop industry following which a few persons were issued summons by the NIA. According to sources, the NIA questioned Afsana Khan on Tuesday. The sources claimed that during the raid they found evidence, and interrogation of Khan was a must.

The sources also said that Khan was called to Lodhi Colony, situated at NIA's headquarters. She was grilled there for over five hours in connection with the gangster-terror nexus.

Khan was said to be very close to Moosewala and the Bhambia Gang. Moosewala used to call her sister. Moosewala had also confided in Khan about the death threats he had been receiving.

Lawrence Bishnoi gang allegedly killed Moosewala to avenge the death of Vicky Middukhera. But before committing



the murder of Moosewala, a number of persons of the Punjabi Pop Industry were threatened and a few were also attacked. The sources said that they were also trying to explore the tiff between the gangsters and Punjabi pop industry. "Ms Khan also sang a song with Moosewala. She had been a contestant in reality show, Bigg Boss. By questioning her we want to know about the gangsters having connections in the Punjabi pop industry," the source said.

The Delhi Police Special Cell and the Punjab Police have arrested over a dozen gangsters in connection with the murder case of Moosewala. During the probe the agencies came to know about the sinister gangster-terror nexus. The Ministry of Home Affairs took the matter seriously and has asked the NIA to do a thorough probe.

Aayush Sharma announces action thriller movie on birthday

MUMBAI: Actor Aayush Sharma on Wednesday announced his fourth feature film, which is described as an action thriller. The currently untitled movie is directed by Katyayan Shivpuri, known for short films like Murga and Hunger, and produced by KK Radhamohan. Sharma, who last featured in the action drama Antim: The Final Truth, unveiled the teaser of the upcoming feature on his 31st birthday today on his official Instagram page.

In the teaser, the actor is seen playing the guitar as a group of armed men barge in to attack him.

Birthday par kuch Action Thrill toh banta hai. Aap sabka pyaar hi hai meri pehchaan. Thank you all for your wishes. Presenting my 4th #AS04, he captioned the post.

In a media statement, Sharma said the upcoming film will present him in a new avatar. The genre of the film is new for me and I'm having a blast working on it. I play a very interesting character with a very distinct look, style and personality, and I am excited for the audience to witness this new avatar of me, he said. In August, the actor had announced his third film billed as "a mytho-modern action adventure".



Zareen Khan's latest 'NAGABHAIKAV' has her trading punches in dual avatar

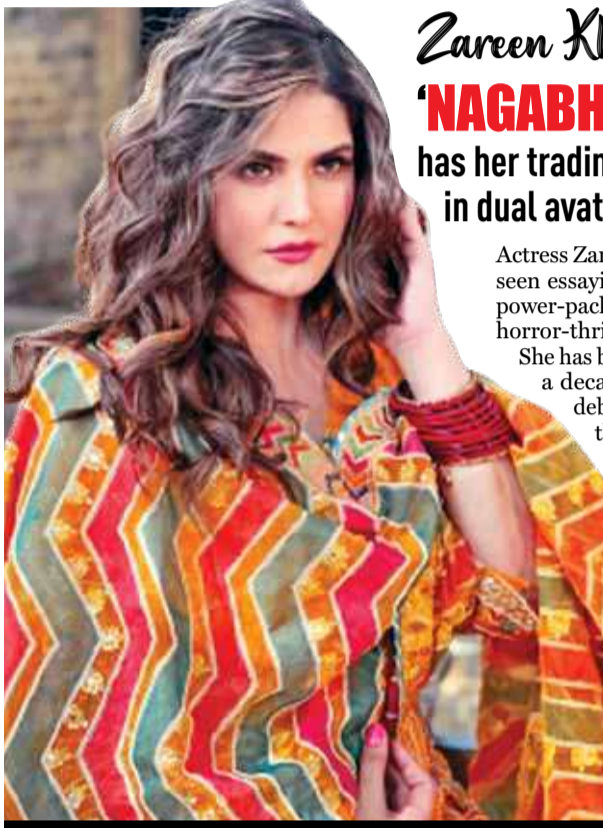
Actress Zareen Khan will soon be seen essaying a double role with power-packed stunts in the Tamil horror-thriller 'Nagabhairav'. She has been in the industry for a decade. Zareen made her debut with 'Veer'. She was then seen in films such as 'Housefull 2' and 'Hate Story 3', after which she forayed into Punjabi movies with 'Jatt James Bond' and Telugu movies with the thriller 'Chanakya'.

Directed by V.C. Vadivudiyam and produced by V. Palanivel, the movie will be released in multiple languages, including Hindi. And for the first time ever, she will be playing a double role.

"While shooting for this film, I felt like I finally got the opportunity to do everything that I have always wanted to do! As of now, we have already shot our portions in Chennai, Pondicherry, and Kumbakonam. We still have one schedule left to shoot, which will be planned mostly around November," she said.

'Nagabhairav' is touted to be an action-packed adventure. So, will she be doing stunts? "I have done a lot of my own stunts, which was really exciting and which also got me injured quite often during the shoots! But I never let that break my spirit or my stride. Now I feel ready to take on more action-oriented roles."

"In an era where female actors are finally being recognised and lauded for their artistry, I am glad that this film gives me the opportunity to be much more than just a pretty face!"



Jesse Williams tapped to star in 'Only Murders in the Building' season 3



LOS ANGELES: "Grey's Anatomy" star Jesse Williams has boarded the season three cast of the Hulu series "Only Murders in the Building". The actor will play a recurring role in the hit mystery comedy-drama television series, created by Steve Martin and John Hoffman, reported entertainment website Deadline.

Williams will star as a documentarian with a particular interest in the case that Mabel Mora, Charles Haden-Savage, and Oliver Putnam -- played by show's lead trio Selena Gomez, Martin and Martin Short -- are working on. Produced by 20th Television, "Only Murders in the Building" earned 17 Primetime Emmy nominations for its second season and won three. Co-creators and writers Martin and Hoffman also executive produce the show along with Short, Gomez, "This Is Us" creator Dan Fogelman and Jess Rosenthal.

The series was renewed for a third season in July. Williams, who earned a Tony Award nomination in his Broadway debut in the Tony-winning revival of "Take Me Out" this year, will next be seen in "Your Place or Mine" with Reese Witherspoon. He will also return to Broadway for the newly extended run of "Take Me Out".

Srushti Tawade on her journey from poetess to a raging 'desi' rapper

She is just 23 and has already created a storm with her unfiltered lyrics in songs such as 'Chill Kinda Guy' and 'Main Nahi Toh Koun' - rapper Srushti Tawade, who's a holds Master's degree in English, started off as a poetess and metamorphosed into a raging rapper with her tracks.

The Mumbai-born artiste did her schooling from National English High School and her college from SNDT Women's college. It was her love for rap and pop culture that helped her reach where she is today.

"Being from Mumbai I have loved rap and pop culture since childhood. I like to spread my work through social media and so I use Instagram to expand myself with my unfiltered lyrics. I am identified as a writer, poet, rapper, satirist," she said.

"On the other hand, I am a writer whose content is renowned for being caustic and unafraid," she added.

She has also written a lot of musical parodies.

"I had things to say and I knew how to say them in songs so I did that," said the Internet sensation, who is currently seen on 'MTV Hustle 2.0'.

Throwing light on her journey, the rapper said: "During the Covid epidemic, I discovered a new gift for myself and started fusing poetry with some rhythm and pulse. After investing a lot of time and energy into this field, and by continually working hard laid the foundation for MTV Hustle season 2, India's first Rap/Hip-Hop reality show."



She added: "Despite having participated in and won most of the poetry competitions prior to the lockdown, I only started rapping after that. I always believed that expressing your emotions through creating poetry and stories helps you unwind."

Srushti made a name with her rap 'Chill Kinda Guy'. The song is based on God and religious fanatics. However, it is the catchy lyrics and hip-swaying music that has caught the eyes of many. "In 'Chill Kinda Guy', a call from God is depicted. Packed by fanatics (anti-fans?), God wishes to clarify the facts so that 'Dikhawe ke liye woh bhakti bhi na kar paaye / Mandiron se masjidon se apne apne ghar jaayein (they leave the pretense of devotion/head home from temples and mosques)." Then there is 'Main Nahi Toh Kaun'?

"It is like a dream come true after performing Main Nahi Toh Kaun rap in five different languages English, Hindi, Haryanvi, Marathi, and Bengali.

'Bigg Boss 16' Salman back to hosting after dengue



Bollywood superstar Salman Khan is back to hosting the "Weekend Ka Vaar" episode after recovering from dengue. The episode will also see Katrina Kaif along with Siddhant Chaturvedi and Ishaan Khattar coming as celebrity guests in 'Bigg Boss 16'.

Last week Karan Johar was seen hosting the weekend ka vaar episode because Salman Khan was down with dengue.

Salman will be interacting with the contestants and analysing their entire week's activities. Katrina and the entire cast will be promoting their film 'Phone Bhoot'.

Contestants who are nominated for this week include Abdu Rozik, Gautam Vig, Gori Nagori, Nimrit Kaur Ahluwalia, Shiv Thakare, Soundarya Sharma, and Tina Datta. Sreejita De and Manya Singh have already been evicted from 'Bigg Boss 16'.

Meanwhile, Shalin Bhanot and Sumbul Touqeer are seen having an argument as he took her name during the nomination task. Apart from this Abdu Rozik is seen talking about friendship and the housemates will be seen fighting with each other over the captaincy tasks.

Samantha's 'Yashoda' trailer to be unveiled by Varun Dhawan, Suriya, Vijay Deverakonda

MUMBAI: The trailer of Samantha Ruth Prabhu's first Hindi theatrical release 'Yashoda' will be launched by Vijay Deverakonda in Telugu, Suriya in Tamil, Rakshit Shetty in Kannada, Dulquer Salmaan in Malayalam and Varun Dhawan in Hindi.

After the teaser release and a sneak peek announcing the launch date of the trailer, the anticipation for Thursday's trailer reveal that is at an all time high. Earlier the makers of the film dropped the teaser introducing the audience to the world of 'Yashoda' leaving everyone intrigued with the dark and thrilling backdrop of a pregnant woman fighting against all odds.

Samantha, who plays the titular role in 'Yashoda', gained prominence with her work in the second season of the Manoj Bajpayee-starrer streaming show 'The Family Man', she then turned into a national sensation with the blockbuster success of her song 'Oo Antava' from 'Pushpa: The Rise'.

Releasing in 5 languages - Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi - 'Yashoda' also stars Varalaxmi Sarathkumar, Ummi Mukundan playing crucial roles with a strong technical crew onboard.



Congratulating Rishi Sunak, Shekhar Kapur shares his experience with racism

MUMBAI: After Rishi Sunak assumed charge as Britain's 57th Prime Minister, renowned filmmaker Shekhar Kapur, who is known for works such as 'Mr. India', 'Masoom', 'Bandit Queen' and 'Elizabeth', used the opportunity to recollect the harrowing experiences of the Indian community when he first went to the UK.

Congratulating the new prime minister, Kapoor took to his Twitter and shared a note saying: "When I first went to the UK as a student, Indians were most likely seen sweeping the floors at Heathrow. Or ran corner shops." He recalled how he was subjected to racial discrimination by his own friends and was beaten up just because he went out with a white woman.

"My friends randomly called me Abdul and I was beaten up because I dared to go out with a white girl," Kapoor wrote. He studied chartered accountancy in the UK, where he worked for several years in the 1970 as a chartered accountant and management consultant.

Expressing his gratitude to Sunak, Kapur said his elevation was a pivotal part of a global shift. "Thank you #RishiSunak, you are part of a huge global shift," Kapur wrote.



Messi stars, PSG among 4 teams advancing in Champions League

His first goal was a nonchalant, outside-of-the-foot finish. His second was pretty much his trademark fast feet outside the area and then a precise curler into the corner.

Lionel Messi kept up his stellar pre-World Cup form to help rampant Paris Saint-Germain become one of four teams to advance to the last 16 of the Champions League on Tuesday, along with Chelsea, Benfica and Borussia Dortmund.

That's more than half of the round of 16 lineup confirmed now five clubs had already gone through and PSG will be one of the teams its rivals are looking to avoid, especially with Messi in this mood. Kylian Mbappe, too.

At opposite ends of their careers, the two superstar forwards are tasked with guiding the French champions to a first Champions League title and they both scored twice in a 7-2 thrashing of Maccabi Haifa.

Neymar, the other member of the team's high-profile at-



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